

Sartorial Disruption

An investigation of the histories, dispositions, and related museum practices of the *dress/fashion* collections at Iziko Museums as a means to re-imagine and re-frame the sartorial in the museum.

Erica de Greef

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Thesis presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of African Studies

University of Cape Town

January 2019

“Clothes are people to Diana Vreeland. Her interest in them is deep and human”
(Ballard, 1960:293, cited in Clark, De la Haye & Horsley. 2014:26)

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work on which this thesis is based is my original work (except where acknowledgements indicate otherwise) and that neither the whole work nor any part of it has been, is being, or is to be submitted for another degree in this or any other university.

Signed by candidate

Erica de Greef
January 2019

Abstract

In this thesis I investigate and interrogate the historical and current compositions, conditions and dispositions of three collections containing sartorial objects of three formerly separate museums – the South African Museum, the South African National Gallery and the South African Cultural History Museum. Although these three museums were amalgamated in 1999, along with eight other Western Cape institutions to form Iziko Museums, each separate sartorial ‘collection’ retains the effects of the divergent museal practices imposed on its objects over time.

I employ the concept of ‘fashion’ in this thesis both to refer to the objects of the study, as well as to the socially-determined set of ideas and ideals surrounding notions such as taste, aesthetics, belonging and modernity. Sartorial objects in museums present strong physical evidence of both deeply personal and extremely public relationships as the traces of and capacity for embodiment imbue these objects with metonymic, subjective and archival capacities.

In addition, I employ the contracted form *dress/fashion* to trouble the commonly held separate notions of ‘fashion’ as a modern, dynamic and largely Western system, and ‘dress’ as ‘traditional’ and an unchanging African sartoriality. I contend that through the terms ‘dress’ and ‘fashion’ – two opposing and segregating tropes still largely present in South African museums – the forms of agency, mutability and historicity applied to Western ‘fashion’ objects, have been and continue to be denied in the collection, classification and curation of African ‘dress’.

I use a sartorial focus to unpack the development of and conditions pertaining to each of the museums in this study, namely an ethnographic museum, a cultural history museum and a fine arts museum. I interrogate the three separate phases of *dress/fashion* objects in these museums, that is, their entry into the collections, their classification and their display. Following each historical investigation, I use a single object-focused strategy to reflect on the specific conditions, dispositions and limitations of these three separate sartorial ‘archives’.

I choose to identify and analyse all the trousers found across the three collections (as well as some significant examples that were excluded), as these particular sartorial objects both reflect and offer critical insights into distinct, and often divisive, definitions of gender, politics and socio-cultural attitudes, many of which also changed over time. I offer close readings of a number of trousers (both in and absent from these collections) that make evident the ways in which these divisions have been scripted into the taxonomies, disciplines and exhibitions at Iziko Museums. These practical and conceptual divisions perpetuate the artificial segregation of these museum objects. The divisions are also reflective of wider divisive museal practices that persist despite the efforts of Iziko Museums to transform and integrate their practices and their collections.

Drawing on the sartorial as an alternative archive I am able to show the types of histories avowed and disavowed by different museal practices. In addition, the close readings expose the distinct and persistent colonial and apartheid underpinnings of sartorial classification and representation across the three Iziko Museums’ collections almost twenty years after the merger. The trousers readings furthermore, make a number of decolonial affordances evident, as the objects reflect not only alternate histories, but also shared pasts prompting alternative contemporary interpretations.

Via the *dress/fashion* collections, this thesis offers a sartorial approach to ‘decolonising’ the museum. This includes both a reframing of various museal practices and principles, and a contemporary re-imagining of histories and their related identity narratives. Despite contemporary critiques and attempts to transform the disciplinary practices, and various cultural and social distinctions still present in the collections and exhibitions at Iziko Museums, segregation and problematic hierarchies still persist. I show how when considered as an archive, the sartorial makes evident other histories, relationships and interpretations. This approach can contribute towards a new, interdisciplinary *dress/fashion* museology as both a means of disruption and revision

at Iziko Museums, contributing towards new contemporary capacities to curate the sartorial offering alternate, decolonial interpretations of past, present and future South African identity narratives.

Acknowledgments

A thesis presents the work of a single author, but it too reflects the intellectual, creative, and critical engagement of a wide range of fellow participants, influential in both small and significant ways – words of encouragement offered on the steps of a research library, or contributing to the intellectual focus, argument, thoughts and diverse developments of this academic journey.

Firstly, I would like to thank my two supervisors National Research Foundation (NRF) Chair of the Archives and Public Culture Research Initiative (APC), Professor Carolyn Hamilton, and African Studies and Archaeology Professor Nick Shepherd who both helped shape this thesis.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to Professor Hamilton both for the NRF funding and for her intellectual support provided throughout the writing of this PhD. Professor Hamilton not only demanded intellectual rigour; she also provided supportive direction, paid critical attention to my language and logics, and offered sharp insights into my specific field of enquiry, ensuring the development of this thesis from concept to fruition. I also received further financial support from the University of Cape Town for research and travel, for which I am grateful.

Secondly, I would like to thank my partner Joanne Bloch, for her critical concerns, endless patience, sound editorial advice and ongoing support throughout the writing of this thesis. Her capacity for simultaneously navigating many cultural and intellectual terrains enabled me to imagine what it could be to contribute, in my own unique way, original ideas to my field of enquiry.

I would like to thank my family who made me feel I can do this. I would also like to thank those I consider my 'other' families. I would not have started this journey of investigation without the support of the many fashion designers, makers, friends, colleagues and students that I got to know from my years at LISOF, Johannesburg. It is for their future inspirations, aspirations and continued development that this work is intended. My colleague and mentor for many years Mike Thoms encouraged me to undertake a Masters in Fine Arts at the University of Witwatersrand, which led me to begin this PhD a few years later at the University of Cape Town.

Thanks too, to my friend Brenton Maart who encouraged me to believe in my capacity to undertake this academic journey, and who introduced me to the dynamic, and critically engaging, interdisciplinary environment of the APC at the University of Cape Town. I am indebted to my intellectual family at the APC, many of whom offered invaluable feedback and support at the biannual research workshops and seminars. Lastly, I acknowledge the conceptual and critical contributions of my international fashion studies colleagues, many of whom followed my research with interest and attention, encouraging my ongoing participation in symposia and inviting contributions to book chapters, journals and various online platforms.

With a research focus on museum collections of dress and fashion, I would like to deeply thank individual past and present staff at Iziko Museums for their interest, attention and contributions. Particular thanks goes to collections manager Lailah Hisham; curators Wieke van Delen, Carol Kaufmann, Esther Esmyol and Gerald Klinghardt; conservation assistants Ntombovuyo Tywakadi, Ayesha Hendricks, Fatima February and June Hosford; and, directors Patricia Davison, Marilyn Martin, Lalou Meltzer and Paul Tichmann.

An enormous thanks also goes to Andrew Juries for the photographs that form such an essential part of the thesis, and to Mandy Darling for her talent and attention to the layout and design of this thesis.

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Notes on Terminology

Three terms relating to clothing predominate in this thesis: dress, fashion and the sartorial. These terms not only define the area of study, they also make evident multiple notions of power, privilege and positionality. I use the three terms specifically to trouble, and hopefully to redress, some of the disciplinary underpinnings that have segregated clothing objects and their practices along a colonialist (and related, capitalist) politics of taste.

Fashion theorist, Yuniwa Kawamura describes ‘fashion’ as a belief or collective activity that is a symbolic and largely intangible concept (2004:1-2). By the sixteenth century, the accepted usage of the term ‘fashion’ reflected clothing or a lifestyle observed in the upper classes of society, with the capacity for change, ambivalence and extravagance (Kawamura, 2004:3,5). ‘Dress’ however, was assigned to a more subordinate level of the material (as opposed to the abstract), and to a largely albeit contested unchanging set of objects and practices (De la Haye & Wilson, 1991:3). Fashion academic Joanne Entwistle argues that ‘dress’ was seen as static and fixed in terms of both design and its social or cultural meanings (2000b:7).

In this thesis I contracted the two meaning-worlds of ‘dress’ and ‘fashion’ to unsettle and collapse the persistent binaries that cling to each term, by proposing the conjoined term *dress/fashion*. I use this word throughout the thesis in an effort to trouble the primarily racial binaries associated with these terms that impact both the classificatory structures and the exhibitionary practices associated with the material culture objects in South African museums. Segregated notions of tradition and modernity; value and authenticity; memory and history; and, change and stasis are reproduced (although seldom made explicit) as opposites in relation to ‘dress’ or ‘fashion’ in museums.

In a similar manner, black British fashion academic Carol Tulloch explores the key terms used in relation to African diasporic dressed identities in a paper titled *Style-Fashion-Dress: From Black to Post-Black*, and proposes that the terms “style, fashion, dress, black, and post-black are carefully considered with regard to their specific use, contemporary relevance, or past-present connections” (2010:273). By blurring the boundaries between the terms (my conjoined *dress/fashion* and Tulloch’s hyperlinked *style-fashion-dress*), we aim to confront the underpinning Western, mostly racially divisive, theoretical frameworks in the fields of both fashion studies and museum practices.

The online dictionaries Cambridge, Merriam-Webster and Oxford each describe ‘sartorial’ as relating to clothes, tailoring or making (usually men’s clothing), and a manner or style of dressing. In this sense, ‘sartorial’ relates both to ‘dress’ as material object and to ‘fashion’ as the symbolic process, or certain style of adornment and embodiment. I use the term ‘sartorial’ in this thesis to disrupt its loosely assigned gender bias as the ‘un-frivolous’ masculine, and to disentangle the associations of tailoring as an apex of European fashionable production. In this regard, I appropriate the term ‘sartorial’ which typically excludes African objects and practices that did not replicate European manners and forms, to work in a similar and complementary way to the *dress/fashion* moniker.

I have retooled the term ‘sartorial’ thus, to refer to larger categories of *dress/fashion* to include so-called traditional dress and its accoutrements, hybrid clothing and its accoutrements, and Western dress and its accoutrements as a productive strategy that is key to decolonial scholarship, and pivotal to the work of this thesis. As Ugandan feminist activist Stella Nyanzi writes, we need new skills, methodologies and theories “to unmute, unsee, and unlearn the outright erasure” of multiple forms of other ways of being in the world (2015:134). It is my aim in this thesis to investigate the possibilities for ‘thinking differently’ about and with the *dress/fashion* objects in South African museums so as to prompt reparation, redress, and transformation.

Abbreviations

BASA – Business and Arts South Africa

GALA – Gay and Lesbian Archives

HKW – Haus der Kulturen der Welt

ICOM – International Committee/Council of Museums

LISOF – London International School of Fashion

SACHM – South African Cultural History Museum

SAHA – South African History Archives

SAM – South African Museum

SANG – South African National Gallery

SAVAH – South African Visual Art History

MOCAA – Museum of Contemporary African Art

MOMA – Museum of Modern Art

MoMu – Mode Museum

V&A – Victoria & Albert Museum

VANSA – Visual Arts National South Africa

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INTRODUCTION

FASHIONING FUTURES AND REFASHIONING PASTS

And as alternative archive, dress and clothing not only open up new dimensions of social change but challenge us to reevaluate and redefine some of our operative categories (Allman, 2004:4-5).

South African fashion activists, Wanda Lepphoto and Kabelo Kungwane, together with photographer Andile Buka formed the Sartists in 2014. They crafted black and white photographs that “would tell the untold stories of urban black sports culture, black identity, and forgotten heroes” (Kungwane, 2015). One such photograph, from the *Tennis Series* (2014), shows three young black men casually seated on a bench, dressed in impeccable, vintage white suits, smart shoes, reading glasses and hats, sporting vintage tennis rackets and projecting confidence and attitude. The insertion of black bodies into domains historically framed as exclusively white make these styled photographs important documents of reclamation. As Lepphoto explains, the Sartists’ creative interventions were aimed at “bringing back some of the History they forgot to tell you in your History class” (Picarelli, 2015:215).

Through a range of carefully selected, historically hybrid,¹ sartorial choices, Lepphoto and Kungwane explore and reconstruct ‘past’ identities. Who were these individuals who played tennis, wrote novels, created political consciousness, fell in love, and hung out with their friends?² As markers of past lives, vintage clothing offers the Sartists, and other South African fashion collectives, such as Khumbula,³ and artists like Ayana V. Jackson (Kuta, 2017) and Mary Sibande (Balboa-Pöysti, 2011) partly scripted identity narratives that they embody to re-enact ‘contemporary memories’, rewriting social, political and personal histories via the objects. In a similar way, South African performance and installation artist, Lerato Shadi, speaking at a TEDxJohannesburg Salon (2016), drew attention to the urgency of rewriting histories, where, as a young black female artist, she inserts her body performatively into what she terms ‘historical mis-truths’ with the aim of disrupting stereotypes and exploring silences (van Blerck, 2016).

These ‘acts of making and re-making’ by contemporary South African artists and designers are disruptive for three reasons. Firstly, they resist the historical stereotype of ‘tradition’ as a singular, timeless past. Secondly, they disrupt contemporary fashion practices.⁴ And, thirdly they reclaim socially and historically disavowed notions such as, modernity, agency, individuality and power. At the heart of many of these contemporary creative reclamations, lies the notion of identity. Literary and cultural theorist, Sarah Nuttal, situates these post-apartheid modes of emerging, and re-imagined identities, as important practices of self-fashioning or *self-styling*, in her book *Entanglement: Literary and cultural reflections on post-apartheid* (2009). The creative, historical re-writing of the Sartists, for example, interrupts the largely Eurocentric narratives of the sartorial objects found in thrift stores and secondhand markets,⁵ fashioning new and hybrid ‘memories’ that are infused with their contemporary, and tangible subjectivities. As Kungwane elaborates,

... shooting the tennis series was a struggle; we walked a long distance to the Yeoville tennis

1 Most of the clothes are ‘thrifed’ (purchased at large secondhand markets); some are reconstructed; and others are designed and purpose-made. Items in a single photo-shoot can span early twentieth-century references, 1960s beatnik culture and 1990s sportswear.

2 Santu Mofokeng’s *Black Photo Album: Look At Me* (2010-ongoing) posed a similar range of questions about the sitters in the original photographs.

3 See Picarelli (2015).

4 I discuss the distinction of fashion as a predominantly Western practice in more detail in this Introduction and its implications for the understanding of dress and fashion practices in Africa.

5 See also Tranberg-Hansen (2009) on youth culture and secondhand clothing practices in Zambia.

court in cream and white suits, carrying vintage wooden rackets. People from Yeoville were staring at us and hollering, like we were going to a wedding ... We literally had 45 minutes to shoot the series. People always see the final product every time; I wish we could show the struggles we go through (Kungwane, 2015).

By documenting the adoption, and adaptation of previously exclusionary sartorial aesthetics from different eras, these contemporary African millennial artists, designers and stylists⁶ are re-fashioning the South African sartorial archive, inserting black bodies into the visual representations of South African *dress/fashion* histories, where for too long, these have been missing. Artists and activists who “address the legacy of imperialism in order to decolonise [the] subjectivities shaped by the colonial archive ... interrupt the established historical narratives of colonial domination,” claims art historian, Ferdinand de Jong (2016:4).

The work of these practitioners stands in stark contrast to the historical record. De Jong argues that, rather than providing new meta-narratives, the archive’s objects and absences enable artists and activists to “work in non-linear ways ... intervening in the archive-as-object” (2016:7). The interventions and interruptions alluded to above, present new micro-narratives, many of them scripted on the body and via the sartorial, or objects that ‘dress’ these bodies. Using different strategies to rework the colonial archive, they go “beyond appropriation to reflect upon their own positionalities” (de Jong, 2016:10).

The need to re-think and remake records of black identity, agency and subjectivity extends into the field of critical fashion studies too,⁷ where there has been a dearth of representation, not only of material, but also a pervasive ‘historical erasure’ of black life and culture in the field.⁸ Editors of the *International Journal of Fashion Studies*, Emanuela Mora, Agnes Rocamora and Paolo Volonte organised a special issue dedicated to black fashion studies, arguing that,

... [the field deserves] special attention because it is developing at the core of a contradiction in western fashion. On the one hand, blackness appears in western mainstream fashion as a sign of the exotic, eccentric or the ‘edgy’ ... [and] on the other hand, such media often reduce black bodies to side players, some sort of prop” (2017:3).

Two recent books addressed this absence: Monica Miller’s *Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity* (2009), and Carol Tulloch’s *The Birth of Cool: Style Narratives of the African Diaspora* (2016). As in the work of the artists above, these authors inserted black fashioned bodies into a historically white canon. Similarly, Eric Pritchard, in his efforts to include black queer identities⁹ in contemporary *dress/fashion* studies, alludes to,

... the epistemological violence [of erasure], where the lives and contributions of black queer people are completely omitted, or have never been thoroughly examined or engaged in the field of fashion studies (2017:108).

6 Trend analyst Dion Chang identifies seven new ‘urban tribes’ in his interrogation of definitive, African fashion consumers and producers in 2018. One of these tribes is “creating their own narrative of the African continent: the African Ambassadors” (2018:4).

7 Fashion studies is part of a spectrum of interdisciplinary studies, including media studies, cultural studies, gender studies, literary studies, etc, and is primarily based on a series of critical approaches centered on questions of change, sociality and notions of modernity. As a method of thinking through objects, fashion studies is a field largely aimed at unsettling fixed ‘meanings’ and exploring multiple narratives, while dress studies on the other hand, is related to disciplines such as history, anthropology or sociology, the focus of which is largely in support of the construction of sartorial meanings (Entwhistle, 2000b; Kawamura, 2004; Rovine, 2014; and Jansen and Craik, 2016).

8 I lectured Fashion History at LISOF, Johannesburg for fifteen years and repeatedly found all reference material identified fashion as a Western practice, and black bodies were almost entirely absent from the record, with representative examples such as Josephine Baker, the quintessential 1920s figure or Jimi Hendricks a 1960s icon.

9 While European queer culture is the focus of Shaun Cole’s *Don we now our gay apparel* (2000), and Dick Hebdige and Ted Polhemus investigate European youth cultures, in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979) and *Streetstyle: from Sidewalk to Catwalk* (1994) respectively, their collective foci primarily rely on underpinnings of Eurocentric social structure, class and gender relations, and meaning and value systems.

Not only were many black South African sartorial stories ‘left out of the history books,’ and the field of *dress/fashions* studies, but the representation of material cultures of black South Africans in museums, has been divided and skewed. Almost all *dress/fashion* artefacts showing evidence of modernity, hybridity or change, were ignored and absented from museum collections; instead a singular, stereotype of unchanged ‘traditions’ was chosen to construct the colonial and later apartheid museal collections and their narratives. In a country where the sartorial has played such pivotal roles in crafting identities, engaging modernities, and politicising and policing bodies, it is critical that the South African *dress/fashion* histories in the historical records – in books and museums – and in their lacunae or absences, are afforded new forms of attention. Anthropologist Paul Basu and de Jong raise the question: ‘how should we rethink archives in relation to decolonial futures?’ (2016:5). Sartorial ‘mistruths’, erasures and absences in the historical record, inform the first sartorial dilemma of this thesis.

ARCHIVAL ENQUIRIES AND NEW FORMS OF ATTENTION

All enquiry around archives demands an attempt to understand the conditions and circumstances of preservation of material as, and the exclusion of material from, the record, as well as attention to the relations of power underpinning such inclusions and exclusions (Hamilton, Harris & Reid, 2002:9).

In other words, what made some narratives powerful enough to pass as ‘history’ while others remained ‘silenced’? Where the Sartists reclaim and re-script lost identity narratives, from the past in the present, it is critical to consider both the sartorial narratives that are missing from, and those skewed by the historical record, and to consider the conditions of the making of these inclusions and exclusions, as well as the persistence of these inclusions and exclusions in the contemporary imagination.

A pair of photographs exhibited in *Developing Characters: Contending Cultures and Creative Commerce in a South African Photography Studio* (2013), an exhibition curated by Steven Dubin, provides another layer in the reading of the inclusions and exclusions of museum collections. That particularly raced, classed and gendered norms informed what was deemed collectable, resulted in not only what *dress/fashion* objects entered the museums, but whose sartorial identities and subjectivities were valued and included in which archives. Dubin describes the photographs:

[A] person shows off a sporty boater-type hat, their waist is sheathed with beaded panels, and they have chosen the stylish sort of pants that amaZulu men have typically reserved for dancing and courting for decades. [Yet] an amazing sartorial transformation is captured in another frame – only the hat and short-sleeved jersey and jewelry remain in place – and revealed, is the same person, now dressed as a woman. Her low-slung breasts and broad hips, hidden from plain sight in the first instance, become fully evident: here is a mannish female daringly putting forward two radically different personas (Dubin, 2013:2–3).

The role of *dress/fashion* is key in this performative act. A pair of studio photographs, taken on the same day, shared the clothing and props, and the same backdrop curtain, lighting and overall mood. The photographs are two out of almost eighty photographs selected from over one thousand negatives originating from the Pietermaritzburg studio of photographer, Singarum Jeevaruthnan Moodley (a.k.a. Kitty), taken between 1972 and 1984.¹⁰ These had been culled by the then-curator of the Killie Campbell Collections¹¹ from an original

10 Sociologist and curator Dubin began working with the negatives in 2011 when South African artist Mary Wafer shared the large collection of negatives with him.

11 The Killie Campbell Collections hold major resources pertaining to the history and culture of southern Africa and KwaZulu-Natal, bequeathed to the University of KwaZulu Natal in 1965 by Dr. Killie Campbell (Hern, 1982).

purchase of the negatives in 1987 (Dubin, 2013:5). Explains Dubin, a large “portion of the shots depicted African people dressed in European garb ... [which the then curator removed]¹² aiming to retain only those pictures that showed Africans in traditional attire ... [and] that [traditional] segment still resides in the museum” (2013:5).

These unnamed vernacular photographs¹³ were privately commissioned. Each of these individuals was carefully styled for the photographic record. Through particular sartorial choices they were ‘performing’ their own identities. Almost forty years later,¹⁴ in 2013 the photographs entered a public realm via the exhibition curated by Dubin at the Centre for African Studies Gallery, University of Cape Town. The pair of images that caught Dubin’s attention presents a cross-cultural and cross-gendered identity dialogue from almost four decades ago.¹⁵ Via a reading of the sartorial choices made, these photographs offer a rich reading of aesthetic, cultural and material narratives.

The sitters’ dual identity narrative was staged through dress – specifically, through the ‘stylish sort of pants’ worn in the first photograph, and the skirt in the second. The pair of photographs raises four important considerations. Firstly, the ‘mannish female’ as Dubin describes above, was largely denied a history, where rigid classifications relating to race, class and gender determined who was remembered and who was excluded. Secondly, until 2013, the photographs remained ‘outside of history’ – history as the realm of the representation of collective memories and identities that are publicly shared and understood. Thirdly, their original exclusion from the archive of the Killie Campbell Collections reflected the dominant museal binary, distinguishing tradition from modernity (Dubin, 2013:5). Lastly, in the remediation of the photographs – in an art gallery in the twenty first century – they reflect anew the subject’s agency and cultural and gender fluidity, all via the embodied sartorial objects, and thereby, enabling a reconstruction of a modest historical, but nonetheless important, narrative.

These photographs bring to attention the second sartorial dilemma of this thesis, that of the segregations and marginalisations of material objects in museums. I use my knowledge of South African museums’ collections and exhibitions to speculate where I could locate the items described above. The straw boater, I suggest could be found in a costume collection with objects predominantly of European origin, such as the Bernberg Collection at Museum Africa in Johannesburg, or the South African Cultural History Museum collection (now part of Iziko Museums in Cape Town). The beaded panels could easily be found in either an ethnographic museum collection, such as in South African Museum collection (now also part of Iziko Museums in Cape Town), or else, these beaded panels, recontextualised as art, could be found in an art collection, such as the Wits Art Museum in Johannesburg, or the South African National Gallery collection (now also part of Iziko Museums in Cape Town).

However, the ‘stylish sort of pants’ or *mblaselo*¹⁶ would be more difficult to source. These hybrid trousers, do not readily answer to a ‘traditional’ definition, and for the greater part of the twentieth century, their blend of western, urban and African, would have excluded them from ethnographic collections, and later, from art collections.¹⁷ Finding the short-sleeved jersey, that ‘remained in place’ in both the photographs, could pose the greatest challenge – a clearly Western, unadorned sartorial object, worn by a black South African would not

12 These discarded negatives formed the collection that Dubin worked with.

13 Ang Lloyd argues though that the most pertinent question about exhibiting these photographs almost half a century later, is “whether or not it’s ethical to display private photos of people who can’t be traced – there is an element of voyeurism, however unintentional” (Lloyd, 2013).

14 In 2005, a smaller series of these photographs were shown in MoMu in Antwerp, as part of a larger exhibition titled *Beyond Desire*, curated by Kaat Debo that showcased a visual dialogue between two cultures.

15 The unnamed ‘cross-dresser’ blurred the gender rules, as black, female, queer and hybrid, at a time when this was highly taboo – the culturally conservative and politically oppressive environment of small town, South Africa in the mid-1970s.

16 *Mblaselo* pants are traditional ‘Zulu’ men’s pants worn to celebrations and events. The pants feature distinctive, patchwork made with bright, primary coloured triangular insets, rick-rack braiding and contrast binding trims, and originated from old clothing that was patched over to further the life of the garment.

17 I show later in the thesis that embellished, and repurposed trousers did enter an ethnographic collection (the South African Museum) in 1994 and a fine art collection, the Wits Art Museum in 2013.

be found in a South African dress, fashion, costume or art collection.¹⁸ However, the same plain, short-sleeved jersey, worn by a white South African – and especially so, if this shirt was worn by a man – could be found in both national, such as South African Cultural History Museum, and provincial clothing collections, such as the Caledon Museum. Dubin does not name the beaded wrap that replaced the trousers in the second image, but describes this moment of gender ‘translation’ where the same person, is now ‘dressed as a woman’. This conventional, ‘traditional’ sartorial item that represents the gendered identity of ‘womanhood’, the skirt, could be found in collections of both ethnographic and fine art museums as noted above, where the object affirms the cultural dispositions of ‘tradition’ and ‘authenticity’ required by these institutions.

Helen Mears, keeper of world art at the Royal Pavilion and Museums, and co-curator of the *Fashion Cities Africa* exhibition in Brighton (2016), reiterates these distinctions, pointing out,

... that African sartorial material traditionally fell into the museum’s ethnographic (now, optimistically ‘world art’) collection. Unlike objects from certain parts of Asia, a few African objects made it into the museum’s Fine Art or Decorative Art collections and – at the time of writing – no African textiles can be found in our fashion and textiles collection’ (Mears et al, 2016:139).

Mears’ argument affirms the second sartorial dilemma of this thesis, namely the notable colonial division between African and western, or Eurocentric sartorial artefacts in museums. As such, African *dress/fashion* objects in collections were, and are still, largely framed as ethnographic and occasionally as art – and thus, predominantly understood as traditional and ahistorical. In the imperial museums of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, “the colonial subject was turned into a figure of ethnography ... [which] effectively erased the historicity of the colonised” (Basu and de Jong, 2016:8). African sartorial objects were, and still largely are therefore, excluded from design and fashion collections that in contrast, reflect history, modernity and progress.

This singular, binary narrative – of modernity versus tradition – prevails in museum collections globally. It underpins both the persistence of divided collections and practices, and the current museal calls for rethinking, remediation and decolonisation. One such project, SWICH – Sharing a World of Inclusion, Creativity and Heritage – involving ten European partner museums, aims to reflect on the role of, and address issues concerning ethnographic museums in the context of a post-migrant, European society (SWICH, 2014). In another project, three Dutch museums – the Tropenmuseum, Afrika Museum and Museum Volkekunde Museum – have established a Research Centre for Material Culture, in an effort to “rewrite global design histories with ethnographic collections as their focal points”.¹⁹

Mela*, a European museum-centered research project based in Naples, addresses the role of museums in facilitating greater social cohesion and inclusivity. Michaela Quadraro poses a series of key questions in an introduction to the project:

How do we consider [museums] in the light of the repressed histories, sounds, voices, images, memories, bodies, expression and cultures that the Occident has either denied or investigated as merely objects of traditional display practices? How do we retrace and re-route museum perspectives taking into account the pressures of the denied bodies of European history repressed in its colonial past and present? ... How do we re-open the museum space, in order to transform it from a place of national identity and the accumulative logic of multiculturalism, to a site of contaminations, fluxes, border-crossings and migrating memories? (Quadraro, 2013:5).

18 Protest t-shirts, which are clearly Western, and worn by black South Africans, have recently entered museums collections as important sartorial signifiers of politics, resistance and the apartheid struggle.

19 Many ethnographic collections are being reconsidered as ‘fashion’ or design in an effort to ‘decolonise’, such as the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam and the Asian Civilizations/Peranakan Museum in Singapore. Sandra Niessen, email correspondence, 12/03/18.

Acceptance in South Africa, that “the archive – all archive – every archive – is figured,” has shaped and informed the argument that institutions such as museums require transformation, or refiguring (Hamilton, Harris & Reid, 2002:7). Dubin describes this concept of transformation in South African museums, as the need for ‘inclusion, assimilation, participation, collaboration, and sometimes, eradication’ (2009:5). To accomplish this, “a great deal of work remains ... to develop our understanding of the circumstances of the creation of the [biased] archival record in general, and of specific collections in particular” (Hamilton et al, 2002:9).

Juliette Leeb-du Toit’s *isiShweshwe: A History of the Indigenisation of Blueprint in South Africa* (2017) is one effort at blurring some of these sartorial binaries and archival resonances.²⁰ *Black Chronicles IV* (2018), hosted by the University of Johannesburg’s Visual Identities in Art and Design (VIAD), is another effort towards redressing the persistent absences of black narratives in archival records, with the exhibition and publication of a series of key, historical photographs.²¹ In addition, individual collectors and curators such as African art historians, Anitra Nettleton and Nessa Liebhammer, and curators Julia Charlton and Fiona Rankin Smith, have presented hybrid, complex and contemporary African sartoriality since the early 2000s in galleries and museums. *Engaging Modernities: Transformations of the Commonplace* (2003), curated by Nettleton, Charlton and Rankin Smith at the Wits Art Museum, showed a range of contemporary waistcoats, accessories and beadwork that challenged conventional, ‘traditional’ categories. In 2007, the Johannesburg Art Gallery showcased contemporary, beaded *minceka* and skirts in the *Dungamanzi (Stirring Waters)* exhibition curated by Natalie Knight, Leibhammer and Billy Makhubele. Similarly, a ‘Zulu’ patchwork waistcoat – a matching item to a pair of *mblaselo* pants in the Wits Art Museum collection²² – and a Robert Mugabe shirt were researched and exhibited in *Lifelines: Object Biographies from the Standard Bank African Art Collection* at the Standard Bank Gallery in 2014 presented by Joni Brenner, Laura de Becker, Stacey Vorster and Justine Wintjes.

These are small markers of awareness and developments towards more inclusive approaches, yet there is “much still to be done” (Hamilton, et al, 2002:9). These efforts are isolated examples, and the problem of absences, selective erasures and skewed representations is still widespread. As contemporary interest in South African sartorial histories, and new forms of engagement with their historical record, has continued to expand, so too have the demands on museum collections by designers, researchers and creatives, looking to these sites for references, inspiration or knowledge.²³ Instead they find gaps, segregated silos, a deep colonial stain, and often inaccessible, misleading or incomplete information.

FASHIONING RACE: DRESS IN MUSEUMS

The observations above bring into focus a range of issues troubling the collection, classification and display of *dress/fashion* in South African museums in the twenty-first century. Notions of race are deeply inscribed onto the objects in the processes of their musealisation, which mark them in the realms of their classification, conservation, circulation, and contemporary uptake in a post-apartheid South Africa. This racial segregation

20 I discuss the exhibition, *The isiShweshwe Story: material women?* held at Iziko Museums (2013) in detail in each of the following chapters. Leeb-du Toit was one of the exhibition’s co-curators.

21 *Black Chronicles IV*, curated by Renée Mussai featured the sound-image installation ‘The African Choir 1891 Re-Imagined’ with songs composed by Phillip Miller and Thuthuka Sibisi, and ‘The Paris Albums 1900’, more than 200 photographic reproductions from W.E.B. Du Bois’s groundbreaking exhibit at the 1900 Paris Exposition (BASA, 2018).

22 Accession number 2014.13(a/b) Purchased from Joni Brenner, who acquired it from Musi Msimangu, who acquired it from his cousin who bought the outfit at Mai Mai market. Worn for special occasions Reproduced in Brenner, J, De Becker, L, Vorster, S and Wintjes, J. ‘Lifelines: Object biographies from the Standard Bank African Art Collection’. 2014. Johannesburg: Standard Bank Gallery p 25. Exhibited: ‘Lifelines: Object biographies from the Standard Bank African Art Collection’ (2014) Standard Bank Gallery. “The history of *mblaselo* pants is undocumented but fascinating. I love the fact that a formal Western piece of clothing was transformed into something that had such a strong African aesthetic. Migrant workers adapted suit trousers or work pants to impress the girls when they went home” (Laird Cherry, 2008).

23 Other creative developments that draw on sartorial references include contemporary South African music, particularly in hip-hop and electro-fusion, such as in the work of Morena Leraba or Spoek Mathambo, whose cultural sartorial references are often fused with contemporary, and futuristic visual cues. Films such as *Black Panther* (2018) and street culture festivals such as the *Afropunk* festival also focus attention in the documentation of creative *dress/fashion* systems that merge tradition and technology.

and its consequences are a key focus of this thesis.

In 2015 I co-convened an online talk, titled 'Fashion and Race', with Tanveer Ahmed from the Open University, in collaboration with the Fashion Research Network in London (de Greef, 2015). Ahmed and I proposed a move that at the time was radical – the combination of fashion and race in the panel title. Our aim was to confront “racial and culturally biased practices, particularly noted in fashion education, however knowing that this occurs throughout the fashion system”.²⁴ In preparation for the discussion, I completed a quick survey of racial diversity and representation across a range of local and international fashion magazines.²⁵ The *Fashion and Race* discussion session focused on ways in which racial bias is perpetuated in an industry that is paradoxically presented as global, diverse and inclusive.

Three years later, the word 'race' not only features on the cover of the January 2018 British *Vogue*,²⁶ but also dominates the cover of the April 2018 British *GQ*, featuring black British supermodel, Naomi Campbell and grimes star, Joseph Junior Adenuga, better known as Skepta, the words are presented in uppercase, *RACE, SEX, LOVE & POWER*. With the first black editor for British *Vogue*, Edward Enninful, and Campbell²⁷ as contributing editor, the shape, content, visual direction, and diversity of voices in this 'bible of fashion' has been noteworthy since Enninful's editorial debut in December 2017.

By contrast, notions of racial exclusion are perpetuated in South Africa. These exclusions are materialised, made visible, and maintained by the museums representing the South African *dress/fashion* histories. The first sartorial dilemma, namely the mistruths, erasures and absences of historical records, is manifested in what entered the collections and in what was excluded. The second sartorial dilemma, namely the effects of various silos, manifested in the ways in which different museums developed collections of clothing according to strict disciplinary discourses. The disciplines influenced the understanding, mediation, collection and circulation of the disparate sartorial objects in the past, and furthermore, continue to haunt these objects in the present. These sartorial dilemmas sustain the unmistakable taint of racial segregation, witnessed in collections such as those found at Iziko Museums.

THE BODY POLITICS OF MUSEUM DISPLAYS

An altogether different form of haunting, explored by fashion theorist Elizabeth Wilson, is the felt response to sartorial displays in museum exhibitions, in her now seminal introduction to *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (1985). Wilson points to the haunting or ghosting, experienced at costume exhibitions in museums, as the “essential presence, body or being, that is always there, but always absent from the display, and where the ‘empty’ artefacts are “the affecting reminders of their now-deceased owners” (1985:1). A close interrogation of Wilson's notion of 'haunting,' draws attention to the modes of representation of *dress/fashion* in museums. The chosen trope of sartorial display, whether via mannequin and body cast or body substitute, or by a complete absence, 'reinserts' the body of the original owner or wearer into the objects on display. In South African museums, these tropes were, and often still are, disciplinarily determined, and showcase *dress/fashion* objects and their wearers in ways that are clearly racially, culturally and socially divided. It is these discrepancies of display that call for an interrogation of the histories and development of practices of 'embodiment' of different sartorial objects in South African museum displays.

The first, and perhaps deepest legacy of 'embodied' museum display practices that cast, literally and symbolically, the body of the wearer into the public realm, was via the scientific realism, and the scientific

24 (Ibid.).

25 I found that on average there very few black models in adverts, only one black model in a fashion feature, not more than two persons of colour in editorials or product spreads, and very few black editors, black designers or black writers in each magazine.

26 'Why we need to talk about race' is a reflective piece by black actor, Michaela Cole (2018:84–5).

27 Campbell also features prominently in the February 2018 issue, in a six-page editorial with designer Azzedine Alaïa (pages 146–151). Campbell has since urged for a *Vogue Africa*, to showcase African creativity, design and aesthetics.

racism, presented in the diorama-type displays favoured by ethnographic museums. Uncanny and life-like body casts would embody the sartorial objects of black South Africans for almost two centuries, with the earliest record of this practice in South Africa noted in 1856. A museum notice from 1856, pointed to “the importance of pending clothing for eight life-sized figures, representing the four Principle Tribes of South Africa, [that would] exhibit native dress better than any other method” (South African Museum Archives, Government Notice No 24, 1856, cited in Dell, 1994:218). Yet, argues Elizabeth Dell, then museum director, Edgar Layard was prepared to display the life-sized figures unclothed for almost two years, “despite the view of them as appropriate clothes-hangers” (1994:242).

Life-casts or body casts would come to constitute the key exhibit at the South African Museum, notably the Bushman Diorama that opened in 1959, and closed almost fifty years later in 2001. Fourteen individual life-casts were staged in a display (alongside taxidermied animals in adjacent galleries) at the South African Museum, a natural history museum. Anthropologist Aaron Glass highlights the collusion of taxidermy practices in “recontextualising and re-framing bodies as ‘specimens’ for anthropological or scientific consumption, and thus for continued colonial domination” (2010:2). Twenty years after the opening of Bushman Diorama, *The Ethnogallery* opened in 1978 (originally named *The Hall of Man*), to offer viewers an encyclopedic display of the material cultures of black South Africans, again using body casts,

... in the exhibition of seven distinctly differentiated cultural groups, namely Nama, San, South Sotho, Tswana, Lobedu, Southern Nguni or Xhosa and Zulu. [The] life-casts were clothed with traditional dress and adornments [performing] acts of weaving, beading, dancing, or playing musical instruments (Cedras 2015:104).

As debates regarding notions of ‘ethnographic representation’ increased in the heated political context of South Africa in the 1980s, then anthropology curator, Patricia Davison crafted a small documentary display, *About the diorama* in 1989. Attempting to raise awareness of museum practices and to stimulate critical response to the diorama, Davison conceded that the documentary display, “seemed to have been largely, although not entirely, unsuccessful” (1992:16). Debate was sparked as is evidenced in the developing public engagement (ibid.) In response to multiple issues of representation inherent in the Diorama, independent artist and curator, Pippa Skotnes (working closely with a range of archival material provided by the South African Museum and elsewhere), created the exhibition, *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushman* at the South African National Gallery in 1996. The exhibition aimed to explore critically “the categorisation and (mis)representation of Bushman peoples, [and] initiated much discussion and controversy between and within indigenous groups, academic circles, the media and the public sphere” (Douglas & Law, 1997:85). The Diorama was closed in 2001, and the *Ethnogallery* was finally closed in 2017.²⁸ Political activist, Wandile Kasibe points to the epistemological violence underpinning the display of bodies in exhibitions, such as the Bushman Diorama and the *Ethnogallery*, and asks if,

... it is this systematic violence of reducing people to things, which lays the groundwork for genocide; that presents itself in the current ethnographic display of personal effects, cultural objects and at some point body casts? Is this in fact evidence of a “Colonial Crime Scene” that now requires a rigorous “de-colonial” investigation? (2017).

Concurrent with the displays of African material culture on body casts at the South African Museum until 2017,²⁹ has been the display of western material culture exhibited on light-coloured mannequins or dress forms in museums such as the South African Cultural History Museum. These abstract and discreet body substitutes, in resin, plastic or cream coloured, cotton calico, represent the neutral museum mannequin favoured by *dress/fashion* historians,

28 I discuss the circumstances and developments of these closures in detail in Chapter Three.

29 No future plans are made available with regards to the African material culture in the museum.

...[as a] pleasing form [developed in the 1930s], where the simple and functional form was seen as an aesthetic ideal. It had nothing to do with trying to reproduce the natural body – it was primarily a technology with the purpose to support the displayed dress, give the garments [some] body, and accentuate the displayed dress – keeping the technology hidden from the public (Hjemdahl, 2014:117).

The racially biased discrepancies, in terms of the different 'body substitutes' used for the display of *dress/fashion* in South African museums, have continued into the post-apartheid period. *The IsiShweshwe Story: material women?* opened in the refurbished *Textile Gallery* at the Slave Lodge Museum (formerly the South African Cultural History Museum, now part of Iziko Museums) in 2013.³⁰ The exhibition showed a collection of distinctive blue-and-white, brown-and-white, or red-and-white discharge-printed, patterned textiles,³¹ namely *isiShweshwe*, and their sartorial interpretations, the greater part of which was donated to the museum in 2012 by art historian Leeb-du Toit. The exhibition showcased the creative and culturally diverse uptake of this 'iconic' South African textile, as well as the cloth's multicultural origins from its trade roots in Asia and Europe to South Africa, and its multivalent forms of use in a post-apartheid South Africa.

'High fashion' and vernacular dress artefacts were displayed in separate cabinets, yet both series of objects were exhibited using the cream-coloured, calico body fillings favoured by the cultural history curators and conservators.³² The two sets of sartorial items were thus linked via their light-skinned body fillings. However, two outfits, a 'Xhosa' *makoti*³³ and 'San' *kaross*,³⁴ were identified as 'traditional' and not 'fashion,' singled out,³⁵ and displayed on life-size, black wire figures.³⁶ These items were two of three 'ethnographic' objects on the exhibition. The third, a 'Bushman' apron, was the only object displayed as an artwork on the wall in the exhibition, a display practice common to art institutions that recontextualises ethnographic objects of adornment, as art.

These examples of the different 're-embodiment practices' of sartorial artefacts in South African museum exhibitions show how not only the objects, but the wearers of these objects were, and still are, presented in distinctly segregated ways. As the locus of diverse identities and subjectivities, these displays of *dress/fashion* in museums therefore demand attention. I argue that 'how' the sartorial object is displayed, is largely determined by individuals based within particular disciplines, and that the disparate disciplinary practices determine the ways in which the 'wearers' are positioned socially and politically. As Joanne Entwistle points out,

... how we perform our identity has something to do with our location in the social world as members of particular groups, classes and communities. Fashion positions us in these worlds (2000:114).

30 The exhibition was jointly conceptualised and curated by the Iziko Social History Collections department and Juliette Leeb-du Toit with sponsorship from the Cape Town Fashion Council, Consulate General of Germany in Cape Town, Da Gama Textiles and the National Heritage Council.

31 The textile is also recognised by its pungent, slightly musty smell and crisp, starched handle.

32 Following the merger of eleven previously separate museums in 1999, this exhibition at the Slave Lodge Museum (now part of the Iziko Museums) predominantly, but not exclusively, drew on the collections and museums practices and practitioners from the South African Cultural History Museum.

33 This outfit is a 'traditional, Xhosa' wedding outfit.

34 The garment is skin wrap, layered over with a patterned cloth, ostrich eggshell and glass beads of 'San' origin.

35 Due to the collaborative nature of the development of this exhibition, with donor Leeb-du Toit, museum staff from various departments in Iziko Museums, and external consultants, it was impossible to track decisions and motivations for the different display forms used in the exhibition.

36 These two wire figures were made at the same time as the figures that appeared in the reconstructed *Ethnogallery* (2012) and it is evident that the same artist made them. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 3. Conservator Bradley Mottie claimed, "we wanted something different, yet with a human figure, it had to be lightweight. We wanted to expose the feet and install shoes if necessary, as in the case of the rotating figure". Bradley Mottie, email correspondence, 02/11/15.

AN IDENTITY POLITICS IN SUPPORTING TEXTS

To contextualise the museal narratives and identity politics (noted in relation to the exhibitions above) within academic and artistic contexts, a survey of the influential reference texts used by curators, ethnographers and historians in South African museums dealing with costume, dress and adornment, clearly shows the depth of racial segregation of sartorial practices, also present in related publications. Two influential South African *dress/fashion* history books that were published during the rise of apartheid (and which reflect deeply the apartheid ideologies of segregation and distinction) continue to inform museal practices dealing with South African sartorialities two decades after the end of apartheid. This is in part due to a lack of other competitive, alternative or even complementary texts, despite the fact that these are outdated and highly problematic.³⁷ Daphne Strutt's *Fashion in South Africa 1652–1900: An Illustrated History of Styles and Materials for Men, Women and Children, with Notes on Footwear, Hairdressing, Accessories and Jewellery* (1975), and Alexander Telford's *Yesterday's Dress: A History of Costume in South Africa* (1972) both focus on the sartorial histories of white South Africans. Telford clearly articulates this in his introduction,

An attempt will be made ... to illustrate, in a general way, the clothing worn by the people who have played their part through two and a half centuries of South African history ... It is not the intention to include the Bushmen, the Hottentots, or the Bantu in their native finery, except as accessories to the scene. They will be shown only as picturesque users of modified European costume (Telford, 1972:1).

The highly skewed representation of a 'whites only' South African *dress/fashion* history in museums, is often paired with the ethnographic 'equivalent,' underpinned by publications such as editor David Hammond-Tooke's *The Bantu-speaking Peoples* (1974), Barbara Tyrrell's *Tribal peoples of Southern Africa* (1976), and Margaret Shaw and Nicholas van Warmelo's four-part publication *The Material Culture of the Cape Nguni* (1972, 1974, 1981, 1988). Earlier publications, such as Isaac Schapera's *The Bantu-speaking tribes of South Africa. An ethnographical survey* (1937), and Alfred Duggan-Cronin's *The Bantu Tribes of South Africa* (1928–1954), as well as visually rich, photographic books by Alice Mertens and Joan Broster's *African Elegance* (1973), and Peter Magubane's *Vanishing cultures of South Africa* (1998), are further examples of ethnographic references used in museums in relation to 'traditional' sartorial object research.

These publications perpetuate the racially divided and divisive history of South African sartoriality in four ways. Firstly, they fail to recognise the overlaps between black and white sartorial histories; secondly they set up a binary between tradition and modernity; thirdly, they identify the local as entirely culturally distinct from the global; and lastly, they differentiate between 'fashion' that is always changing and 'dress' that is largely static.³⁸ By adhering to the racial binaries reflected in these texts, museum practitioners continue to limit their capacity to understand *dress/fashion* beyond these colonial and apartheid constructs.

A number of important essays in Hamilton and Leibhammer's edited volume, *Tribing and Untribing: Identity and the Material Record in Southern KwaZulu-Natal in the Late Independent and Colonial Period* (2016) include critical reflections on notions dress, self-fashioning and claims to modernity via material cultures. This includes Hlonipha Mokoena's essay 'Knobkerrie: Some Preliminary Notes on the Transformation of a Weapon into a Swagger Stick, or Sometimes a Stick is Not Just a Stick,' Sandra Klopper's study 'Forging Identities in an Uncertain World: Changing Notions of Self and Other in Early Colonial Natal,' and Nettleton's 'Curiosity and Aesthetic Delight: The Snuff Spoon as Synecdoche in Some Nineteenth-Century Collections from Natal and the Zulu Kingdom.'

A radical rethinking of the notions of dress, fashion, adornment and costume may be necessary to shift

37 The books are also still used in South African fashion schools as reference and are also found in university libraries with fine arts, drama, film and media studies departments.

38 I discuss this binary in further detail below.

South African museum practices dealing with *dress/fashion* objects so that they may attempt to address the inherited sartorial controversies and dilemmas. Jean Comaroff's influential essay, 'Fashioning the Colonial Subject: The Empire's Old Clothes' (1997) contextualises the agentive and expressive qualities of *dress/fashion* in southern Africa as a means to understand the formation of new social relations with the influx of Christianity in the nineteenth century. Similarly, Hildri Hendrickson's edited collection of essays in *Clothing and Difference: Embodied Identities in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa* (1996) and Robert Ross's *Clothing: A Global History* (2008), continue the critical historical survey of the legacies of colonial *dress/fashion* encounters. These histories are complex, as seen in Nettleton's challenge of the persistent division between tradition and modernity in *Beadwork, Art and the Body: Dilo tse Dintshi / Abundance* (2016).

SOUTH AFRICAN *DRESS/FASHION* IN MUSEUMS

The intersection between African sartorial practices and their curation in museums is the focus of editors, JoAnn McGregor, Heather Akou, Nicola Stylianou and Lou Taylor's *Creating African Fashion Histories* (forthcoming, 2019), which follows the exhibition, *Fashion Cities Africa* (2016) held at the Brighton Museum and the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam (2017). Curators Helen Mears, Martin Pel and Harriet Hughes of *Fashion Cities Africa* (2016), selected and showcased the work of contemporary designers, fashion collectives and street cultures from four African cities, Casablanca, Nairobi, Johannesburg and Lagos, making this the first major British museum exhibition dedicated to contemporary African fashion. Post-apartheid, South African contemporary fashion was represented with the work of designers Thula Sindi and Marianne Fassler, entrepreneur and stylist Maria McCloy, and the upcycled garments and photographs of the Sartists. The eclectic diversity of the display modes, the dialogues engaged between selected works, and the curators' use of contemporary, black mannequins "seemed to offer a way out of the disciplinary and ethnocentric limitations set by [ethnographic] collections, which were largely amassed in a colonial context" and countered the ongoing representation of African sartoriality as static, stereotypical and 'traditional' (McGregor, forthcoming, 2019:1).

Similarly, African fashion historians, Suzanne Gott, Leslie Rabine, Kristyne Loughran and curator Betsy Quick highlighted notions of modernity and hybridity through the complex influences of trade routes in both contemporary and historical African print textiles and fashions in *African-Print Fashion Now! A Story of Taste, Globalization, and Style* (2017), at the Fowler Institute, University of California, Los Angeles. Shown together with photographs, fine art artefacts, video installations and bold graphics, the exhibition employed an interactive dynamism often denied the display of African artefacts. Curator Sarah Hume also "looked beyond the simple binary of 'western' fashion and 'traditional' African dress," in an exhibition *Fashions of Southern Africa* (2016) at the Kent State University Museum in partnership with the Department of Pan-African Studies and Fashion School (Hume, 2016). The exhibition included work of South African and Namibian designers, including Marianne Fassler, Laduma Ngxokolo, Rich Mnisi, Maria McCloy and Pichulik from South Africa, and Namibian designers, Maria Caley and Quin-Leigh Hammond.

International museum attention in the last decade, on African and South African contemporary and historical textiles and *dress/fashion*³⁹ has seen some local uptake of these practices too. A number of projects resulted from collaborations between fashion practitioners (designers, artists, photographers, stylists, collectors, etc.) and both private and public institutions, such as David Krut galleries,⁴⁰ the Museum of Art and Design (MOAD)

39 Increased international attention has led to a range of publications, such as the *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion: Africa* (2010) edited by Eicher and Doran Ross, Helen Jennings' *New African Fashion* (2011), Jacqueline Shaw's *Fashion Africa* (2011), and Rovine's *African Fashion: Global Style* (2014). Authors exploring the developments of African fashion cultures in complex, multicultural and dynamic settings include Tulloch in *Black Style* (2004), Jansen's survey of contemporary Moroccan fashion in *Modern Fashion Traditions: Negotiating Fashion and Modernity* (2016), and Welters and Lillethun in *Fashion History: A Global View* (2018).

40 Krut Galleries in Cape Town, Johannesburg and New York showed collaborations with Lisa Jaffe of Guillotine, Black Coffee and Strangelove.

in Johannesburg, and Museum Africa (working with South African Fashion Week⁴¹ and LISOF School of Fashion), also in Johannesburg.⁴²

However by and large, the curation of South African sartorial artefacts in South African museums lags behind these re-mediations, or new forms of representation in two distinct ways. Firstly, artefacts deemed authentic and ‘traditional’ were, and still are, mostly collected by and exhibited in ethnographic museums and art galleries. Secondly, western *dress/fashion* items are still chiefly donated to, collected by and displayed in provincial social history museums and larger, national cultural history museums. One exception to this segregated sartorial binary (of tradition and modernity), in South African museums is the collection, conservation and display of printed, political t-shirts by a number of post-apartheid museums and archives, for example, Museum Africa, the Apartheid Museum, Hector Pieterse Museum, South African History Archives and the Iziko Museums Social History Collection. However, it can be argued that the t-shirts in many cases are representing a political, ‘struggle’ narrative, and are thus not included in the museums’ collections or exhibitions as ‘*dress/fashion*’ – namely, as an exemplar of cut, shape, materiality, personal expression, design, or even memento, but rather that they signify a recent, embodied politics of identity.

The binary of tradition and modernity has also resulted in a number of discernible gaps in terms of South African everyday, street or contemporary *dress/fashion* in museum collections.⁴³ There are no museum archives of South African designer works, nor are there collections of South African counter-cultural fashion – such as *pantsula*,⁴⁴ Afro-punk or Afro-fusion.⁴⁵ In 2010, German art historian Daniela Goeller, began researching South African street subcultures, documenting migrant mineworker’s sartorial performances, known as *swenking*,⁴⁶ and the style dialogues of local dance subculture, *pantsula*. The suits, accessories and sartorial stories of the *Swenkas*⁴⁷ and the *pantsula*⁴⁸ are totally absent from South African museums. That these sartorial histories have survived in practice and public imagination, reflects what De Jong asserts that, “memories of modernity are not exclusively located in the archive (following Taylor 2003) ... and embodied memory is often stored in repertoires transmitted outside the archive” (2016:12).

In 2015, the University of Johannesburg’s Visual Identities in Art and Design (VIAD) Research Centre held a three-day research event (*Re*)-Fashioning Masculinities: Identity, Difference, and Resistance, led by research chair, Leora Farber, that placed *dress/fashion* central to the production of “particular forms of transnational, transhistorical, transcultural, Afropolitan, Afro-urban, and Afro-futurist black masculinities” (Farber, 2015:111). Together with a series of film screenings, an exhibition, performances and panel discussions at the university’s Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture (FADA) Gallery, were the sartorial choices of some of these South African street cultures – from checked sweaters, to poor-boy caps, and a range of converse sneakers – seen for the first time, and to date, possibly only time, on display in South African museum or art gallery.

41 I curated the exhibition *Material Memories* to coincide with SAFW 2009, which included archival objects and the work of contemporary designers.

42 *What is your Dress Heritage?* collaboration LISOF Fashion Theory students who worked closely with the museum’s collections.

43 Efforts at redressing this absence is seen in recent acquisitions to the Iziko Social History collections, such as a small selection of Chris Levin couture items donated in 2013, and the purchase of a Laduma by Maxhosa knitted cardigan, and wool waistcoat by Thabo Makheta for their collection in 2014.

44 *Pantsula* combines dance, street culture and fashion into a way of storytelling that relates to and reflects both historical and present-day situations and is seen as a way of life in Johannesburg’s townships (Richardson, 2016). *Pantsula* dancers are distinguished by their American-inspired wardrobes favouring Converse sneakers, Dickies work pants, collared shirts, and sometimes white gloves or bucket hats. Crew members always dress similarly, if not in identical outfits, and pride themselves on being well dressed (Livsey, 2016).

45 See Tamagni (2015) *Fashion Tribes: Global Street Style*.

46 Practiced since the early 1960s, men and recently women compete without music, presenting their clothing and assorted accessories in every possible detail to a seated judge. *Swenkas* express nuanced notions of modernity, urbanity and identity through both their dress and social actions (Crossley, 2012).

47 In 2004, Jeppe Rønde released a documentary about these South African ‘dappers’ titled *The Swenkas* (Picarelli, 2016).

48 The first American exhibition to focus on the contemporary South African movement, *pantsula*, at Fowler Museum at University of the California, Los Angeles, *Pantsula 4 LYF: Popular Dance and Fashion in Johannesburg* (2017), featured South African photographer, Chris Saunders, who worked closely with *pantsula* groups and Goeller, featuring the iconic style of this street culture (Livsey, 2016).

The disjuncture between what is largely still an untransformed sartorial narrative in South African museums and the rich repertoires of South African sartorial histories, and contemporary, creative expressions (that disrupt the constructed binaries of tradition and modernity, and history and culture) is made even more obvious by the growing international attention afforded South African *dress/fashion*. Only one South African museum is considering the critical urgency, and importance of, developing and exhibiting a dedicated collection of African *dress/fashion*,⁴⁹ namely the recently opened Zeitz Museum of Contemporary African Art (MOCAA). The private institution sets as its mandate,

... the responsibility to collect and preserve for future generations the extraordinary contemporary fashion arts to be found in Africa and its Diaspora and the world, and to use and exhibit the collection to educate and inspire. This institution has a mission to represent the diversity of creativity in Africa and its influence beyond our shores (VANSA, 2017).

DRESS, COSTUME, FASHION AND ADORNMENT

Central to the concerns of display and related identity politics are the inherited distinctions of the terms ‘dress,’ ‘costume,’ ‘adornment’ and ‘fashion’ applied to sartorial objects in museums. The term ‘dress’ is commonly, and conventionally used in museums to refer to sartorial objects that exist outside of the Western fashion system, while the term ‘fashion’ is commonly, and conventionally applied to sartorial objects of Western urban origins, that reflect so-called change and innovation – European folkloric costume and American indigenous clothing would be considered rural and therefore be identified as ‘dress’. I recognise the slippage of the usage of these terms practically, conceptually and theoretically in the field.⁵⁰ Through my use of the conjoined term *dress/fashion*, which intentionally amalgamates the terms and related practices that are largely used to distinguish, identify, classify and separate sartorial objects in museums, I aim to interrogate and trouble this distinction. The prevailing distinction between the two terms is the notion of change, where ‘fashion’ represents, and insists upon change, and ‘dress’ largely relies upon repetition⁵¹ and to some degree, sameness. Uniforms and cultural clothing practices are often offered as examples of ‘dress’ practices that do not change rapidly or radically over time. On the other hand, fashion is understood to bring with it instability, ambiguity, fluidity, and, as Christopher Breward and Caroline Evans point out, fashion is seen as a “vibrant metaphor for modernity itself” (2005:3).

Although the two terms are often used interchangeably, different disciplines have generally tended towards one or other term. Entwistle argues that ‘dress’ and ‘adornment’ are largely “associated with anthropological literature [whereas], the term ‘fashion’ carries with it the more specific meaning of a [clothing] system found in western modernity ... and is generally used in sociology or cultural studies” (2000:40–41). Fashion theorist Yuniwa Kawamura offers perhaps a stricter distinction between the two terms by contrasting ‘dress’ as the material and artefactual, with ‘fashion’ as the ideological and symbolic (2005:1–5).

Key to this thesis is the impact of the ways in which these terms are used in relation to South African sartorial practices, as is, the use of the word ‘tradition’ which is applied to ‘dress,’ in contrast to notions of modernity applied to ‘fashion’. African fashion historian, Victoria Rovine notes how ‘fashion’ is distinguished from ‘dress’ in the global north, as that which “incorporates its own obsolescence through change” (2001:95). Rovine challenges these dualistic definitions, claiming that there is an abundance of scholarship concerning African ‘dress’, and yet few analyses that address African clothing as ‘fashion’, which

49 The Museum of Modern Art (MoMa), New York commissioned a unique MaXhosa jersey, and a patchwork pair of chinos as part of a ‘thrifed’ and re-crafted ensemble of a suit, shoes and hat from the Sartists for their exhibition, *Items: Is Fashion Modern?* (2017) In 2018, the Brighton Museum purchased three items from Clive Rundle’s *Afridesia* (2003) collection.

50 I will address this in more detail in the following section, both in terms of the colonising effects and legacies of the usage of dress or fashion, and their decolonial affordances.

51 Joanne Eicher defines dress as “arising from a set of practices repeated over time” (2010:4).

... like modern or contemporary art, is associated with the Western, industrial capitalist world. In the Western popular imagination, Africa is closely associated with authenticity and adherence to tradition, concepts diametrically opposed to the ephemerality of fashion (Rovine, 2014:5).

I identify not only the immediate dilemma of segregation, stereotype or marginalisation of African sartoriality in museums or film and print media, but also the contested terrain of academic, and conceptual distinctions in terms of inclusions and exclusions from 'fashion'. Editors Agnes Rocamora and Anneke Smelik admit to the Western bias in thinking about fashion in their publication, *Thinking Through Fashion* (2015), and welcome follow-up books "that would shed light on systems of thought and fashion not framed by those of Western modernity" (2015:7). Similarly, in an effort to "disrupt the persistent euro- and ethnocentricity in fashion discourse," editors Angela Jansen and Jennifer Craik confront this bias⁵² by bringing together authors from cross-cultural perspectives in *Modern Fashion Traditions* (2016:1). The need to move away from Western discourse and Western categories of thought, underpins decolonial theorist Walter D. Mignolo's argument that prioritises the importance of shifts in thinking about issues – such as aesthetics, politics and social orders – in order to bring to the fore "other epistemologies, other principles of knowledge and understanding and, consequently, other economies, other politics, other [aesthetics]" (2007:453).

In their introduction to *Fashion History: A Global View* (2018), authors Linda Welters and Abby Lillethun propose that a global rethinking of the notion of 'fashion' is possible – one that would present a more inclusive and more diverse narrative. They argue that,

... it is our belief that fashion history as currently conceptualised is Eurocentric ... [that] the paradigm around fashion scholarship is shifting ... and [that] the problem of exclusion can be resolved by reconceptualising fashion history as a global phenomenon (2018:7).

The Nest Collective (a multidisciplinary arts collective based in Nairobi) produces fashion, film, visual arts and music at the intersections between poetry, feminism, queer theory, history, design and technology, that

... explores our troubling modern identities, re-imagines our pasts and remixes our futures. In all our works, we prioritize the acknowledgement and stating of our different individual perspectives and privileges, and our work strives to convey this dialogue (The Nest Collective, 2018).

Similarly, Johannesburg-based collective, the Sartists construct a range of performative re-embodiments through fashion, photography and digital media (Kungwane, 2015). Lepphoto claims that their interventions are aimed at 'occupying' fashion history, "bringing back some of the History they forgot to tell you in your History class". In much the same way, Walé Oyéjidé – the designer whose creative work featured in the film, *Black Panther* (2018) – describes how he uses fashion to rewrite history and to share the importance of the representation of "the elegance and grace of often-marginalized groups" (2018).

SARTORIALITY, MATERIALITY AND THE MUSEUM MANNEQUIN

In order to interrogate the distinctive *dress/fashion* constructs, their predominantly binary stasis in museum representations, and the large gaps in South African sartorial histories I propose that the museal objects themselves may hold some answers to these enquiries. Although true for a small proportion of garments

52 Two important books addressed the lacuna of Asian fashion identities, contributing to thinking about fashion beyond the western hegemony, namely Dorinne Kondo's *About Face: Performing Race in Fashion and Theater* (1997), and *Re-Orienting Fashion: The Globalization of Asian Dress* (2003), edited by Sandra Niessen, Ann Marie Leshkovich and Carla Jones.

that enter museums collections – these are perfect, pristine and often elite, ‘museum quality’ objects (Steele, 2008:7) – I concur with Christopher Breward, that there has been a shift in appreciating sartorial objects in museums that are marked and worn (2008:83–84). Sartorial exhibitions such as *Tattered and Torn* (2012) at the Empire Historic Arts, *Present Imperfect: Disorderly Apparel Reconfigured* (2017), curated by Amy de la Haye and Jeffrey Horsley, and *Fashion Unraveled* (2018) at the Fashion Institute of Technology, place at the centre of curatorial attention, qualities of imperfection, marking, mending, decay or alteration.

That sartorial objects hold meanings and evoke memories is also the focus of editors, Marius Kwint, Christopher Breward and Jeremy Aynsley’s *Material Memories: Design and Evocation* (1999). Similarly Ann Jones and Peter Stallybrass consider the entangled, and often metonymic relationships between clothing, bodies, longing, and memory in *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (2000), particularly the ways in which, “clothing as a worn world [was] a world of social relations put upon the wearer’s body” (2000:3). Stallybrass further notes that clothing “receives a human imprint, where the human trace is remembered through a crease, scent, hole or stain” (2012:69). Likewise, contemporary artist Ellen Sampson writes,

... over time garments become records of lived experience, covered with the marks of use. Wear is materialised in clothing in many ways, in stretching, tearing, abrading and creasing. These marks are not singular, linear or orderly; instead they overlap, each one impacting and producing another. The process of inscription is complex [with] imprints jostling together non-contemporaneously. As a garment is worn, its surface becomes a map of the actions performed within it (2017a).

The uncanny, absent presence of the wearer is found in the folds, stains and scuffs of clothing. In museum collections these traces become important evidence of lives lived and lifestyles followed. Furthermore, this leads to thinking about the original owners of the objects. Sandra Weber and Claudia Mitchell consider what this means in *Not Just Any Dress: Narratives of Memory, Body, and Identity* (2004), while Sophie Woodward interrogates the relationship between persons and things with her focus on fashion objects and their owners and wearers in *Why Women Wear What They Wear* (2007), and in ‘Object interviews, material imaginings and unsettling methods’ (2016). Bringing the wearer’s social and emotional framework to bear on the objects and join the already well-established material-based approach in museum practices, curator Sarah Scaturro considers a fashion-centric or values-based approach when dealing with *dress/fashion* collections, and their conservation and exhibition (2017).

These approaches to the objects, however critical and important, do not fully answer or succinctly address yet another sartorial challenge for the museum: that of the empty garment. Whether using a substitute, body cast or proxy, the need to fill garments appropriately, or re-insert the correct bodies in *dress/fashion* exhibitions, is crucial to exhibition designers, fashion curators and textile conservators. This was the focus of Lou Taylor’s influential publication, *The Study of Dress History* (2002), and has received ongoing academic attention since, as seen in the work of Jessica Schwartz with *Curatorial Practices in Museums housing Fashion and Dress Collections in the United States and the United Kingdom* (2012), Julia Petrov in *Dressing Ghosts: Museum Exhibitions of Historical Fashion in Britain and North America* (2012), Anne-Sophie Hjemdahl’s ‘Exhibiting the body, dress, and time in museums: a historical perspective’ (2014), Jeffrey Horsley’s ‘Re-presenting the body in fashion exhibitions’ (2014), and Elizabeth Wood’s thesis *Displaying Dress: New Methodologies for Historic Collections* (2016). Although each deal with the challenges of the ‘mannequin’ in museum exhibitions, only Daniela Gutierrez deals with a politics of the mannequin; in her case study, of the politics of gender in *The Displays, Silences, and Aesthetic Possibilities of Museum Fashion’s Gendered Geopolitics* (2014).

In Carol Tulloch’s curatorial work, she explicitly inserted the black ‘body’ into the clothing on exhibit in her seminal *Black British Style* exhibition at the V&A Museum in London, which she co-curated with Shaun Cole in 2004. The exhibition was radical at the time and reflected the otherwise, hegemonic whiteness of contemporary British fashion exhibitions. Just over a decade later, blockbuster exhibitions such as the

Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams (2017) exhibition, as well as smaller exhibitions such as the Fashion Institute of Technology's *Black Fashion Designers* (2016), have used black and Asian-featured mannequins that reflect a more inclusive notion of representation.

A close investigation of the politics of race, in terms of various tropes and types of *dress/fashion* mannequins used is necessary. An analysis of this across different South African museums can expose the continued politics of segregated identities at work in sartorial exhibitions. This investigation of 're-embodied materialities' informs and underpins the rationale for this thesis. Wayne Modest, head of the Research Centre For Material Culture at the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, considers how objects, particularly in ethnographic museums were conscripted into hegemonic museum narratives to become representatives of the 'exotic', 'other', 'outsider' or 'alien', and yet, he argues that it is possible to rethink these objects beyond the restrictive stereotypes (Modest et. al, 2017). Responding to Arjun Appadurai's provocation that museum objects are 'accidental refugees', Modest argues that, museum objects "are like citizens in exile" and that their identities are in fact, unstable and often damaged, and their narratives largely unfinished (ibid.).

Sartorial objects in museums, seen as such as 'citizens in exile', carry both the social meanings of their dislocation and subsequent relocation, and the embodied memories of their original 'lives'. This renders *dress/fashion* collections powerful as sites of the now-absent, individual owners or wearers. In this regard, they also present a range of decolonial affordances for new or revisited social, cultural and political articulations of alternate histories and identities. The call to decolonise museums has largely focused on ethnographic, world culture, natural history museums and art institutions, while fashion and textile museums have largely remained uncontested. My provocation however, points to a further need to decolonise the notion of whose 'fashion' is in which museums and what underpins the identities, agencies and subjectivities of these objects and their wearers in relation to a post-apartheid South Africa.

IDENTIFYING THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Delinking means to change the terms and not just the content of the conversation (Mignolo, 2007:459).

To deal with the problems, understand the controversies and address the inherent colonial and apartheid legacies pertaining to the collection, classification and display of *dress/fashion* in South African museums, I propose the following overarching questions: How do the three separate collections of sartorial objects⁵³ pertaining to the museums of this study, reflect and reproduce past museum structures, practices and dispositions; and secondly, how have the individual museums' categorisations of these objects variably as dress, fashion, clothing, art and costume over time, skewed the understanding of these objects and contributed towards narrowly-defined and ill-framed cultural stereotypes, which restrict the possibilities for developing the new discourses of and with *dress/fashion* in a post-apartheid South Africa? Thirdly, how do congealed categorisations persist within Iziko Museums (with its explicit 'transformation' mission to dismantle inherited divisions), whilst external socio-political changes and museal critiques abound?

In support of these central questions, I propose a further question, which considers my research methodology as a means to address the colonial disavowals, stereotypes and exhibitionary tropes at work in South African museums; namely, whether a fashion-led enquiry or range of critical sartorial analyses can provide interventionist strategies that will unsettle or adjust the modes of practice or ideologies that contributed to, and largely sustain the sartorial dilemmas pertaining to South African *dress/fashion* histories in museums.

53 Despite the integration efforts reflected by the Iziko Museums merger of 1999, the disparate collections of *dress/fashion* items remain siloed, even in shared storerooms and galleries, demarcated by their inherited disciplinary boundaries.

Five sub-questions further unpack my enquiry. Firstly, in what ways are binaries, such as dress and fashion, tradition and modernity, local and global, inscribed onto the sartorial objects through their musealisation, and how do these binaries impact on the objects' meaning or even agency, when they are accessed and understood in the present? Secondly, how have practices of re-embodiment of the sartorial objects in museum displays via mannequins or body substitutes contributed to, and perpetuated, the production of racial segregation and stereotype?

The third sub-question identifies the notion and impact of absence in this thesis, namely what absences and silences⁵⁴ are made evident through a focused, single object-type, research approach, and, what do these gaps reflect? Fourthly, as the archive provides an effective technology through which traces of the past are made available in the present, in what ways do the sartorial objects currently in, and absent from, museum collections reflect contemporary identity narratives and post-apartheid subjectivities? Lastly, how do discursive orders imposed upon museum objects in the collections governed by different disciplines, affect the objects, and the writing of South African sartorial histories? I use the answers to these questions as the basis for a discussion of a future oriented question: in what ways can new understandings of sartorial objects via a fashion-based approach disrupt established museal practices, perceptions and classifications?

IZIKO MUSEUMS AND THE THREE SARTORIAL COLLECTIONS

South Africa has around eighty listed museums and perhaps double this number of unlisted museums, very many of which have sartorial objects in their collections. This includes military uniforms in war museums; personal clothing artefacts like gloves, hats or handkerchiefs in museums dedicated to individuals, such as at the Olive Schreiner Museum in Cradock; any number of period dresses in small, provincial museums; beadwork and sometimes, high 'fashion' in art museums; displays of historical costume in elaborated interiors of house museums; and more recently objects such as resistance t-shirts in memorial museums, such as the Hector Peterson Museum, and Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg. This adds to the more comprehensive collections of clothing and adornment in South African ethnographic and cultural history museums, such as The Albany Museum in Grahamstown, Museum Africa in Johannesburg or the McGregor Museum in Kimberley.

A trip to any number of these museums will bear witness to the limited standard and stereotypical displays of, and understanding about, the sartorial objects in the collections (described above) that both serve and sustain narratives of racial, social and cultural segregation. While costume displays in cultural history museums continue to show a largely Eurocentric, colonial heritage on white mannequins, indigenous sartorial artefacts are mostly found in natural history and ethnographic museums commonly displayed on body casts or wire mannequins. A third sartorial site, fine art museums, showcases predominantly indigenous sartorial artefacts, and occasionally western fashion, as art.

In 1999, eleven previously segregated Cape Town museums and their collections, merged to form Iziko Museums, three of which held comprehensively developed collections of *dress/fashion*, namely the South African Museum, the South African Cultural History Museum (which I will refer to as the Cultural History Museum in this thesis), and the South African National Gallery (which I will refer to as the National Gallery in this thesis). These three national museums amalgamated with two other national institutions, the William Fehr Collection and the Michaelis Collection, together with the Maritime Centre and five smaller house museums in 1999, to form what is now known as Iziko Museums prompted by national imperatives to transform museums to better suit a post-apartheid South African democracy.⁵⁵ Iziko Museums Chairman, Ciraj Rassool describes the multiple aims of merger as,

54 In many colonial archives the voice of the 'native' has been erased, causing Gayatri Spivak to ask to what extent the history of the subalterns could yet be written given their silencing, in 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988).

55 The merger was initially named the Southern Flagship Institution in 1999, then Iziko Museums of Cape Town in 2001, and later, Iziko Museums of South Africa, in 2012 (Annual Report, 2013/14:3).

... it was intended to be a catalyst to drive change; to undo entrenched divisive and discriminatory policies; and to bring together these museums and diverse collections of art, social and natural history to ... redress the past [by], not only looking at the inequities within the collections and the way that they are presented, but also by addressing glaring contradictions in modes and paradigms of collecting that are made even more offensive in light of our new Constitution (2013:8).

The South African Museum, the Cultural History Museum and the National Gallery and their *dress/fashion* collections are the nexus of this thesis, as jointly they represent the three major disciplinary fields that hold collections of material culture. In addition, the dynamic of the merger brought these collections into sharp relief, resulting in a demand for integration and interdisciplinary dialogue. The opening of the Social History Centre in 2010 marked a shift for Iziko Museums, in terms of the institution's "thinking and practice, [as] collections once separated by histories of colonialism and apartheid were centralised and integrated" (Duggan and Kashe-Katiya, 2010). In a panel discussion held on the occasion, entitled 'Social History Collections: Registering Change in Iziko after Apartheid' (2010), then director of Iziko's Social History Collections, Lalou Meltzer, identified the unpacking of the various collections into the integrated storerooms,⁵⁶ an "opportune moment for the institution to reflect on past practices, and take on the challenges of developing new ways of generating knowledge, and representing the country's complex history" (Meltzer, cited in Duggan and Kashe-Katiya, 2010).

There are no studies or even comprehensive accounts of the various sartorial collections in any South African museum, although South African museum research itself is fairly extensive.⁵⁷ Sara Byala's study of the history and development of Museum Africa in Johannesburg in *A Place That Matters Yet: John Gubbins's MuseumAfrica in the Postcolonial World* (2013), and Anna Tietze's detailed survey of the South African National Gallery in *A History of the Iziko South African National Gallery: Reflections on art and national identity* (2017) are both good examples of in depth museal research, but each offers scant attention to the sartorial. One exception to this would be the work of museum anthropologist, director and academic, Davison, who interrogated the material culture collections and displays of the South African Museum⁵⁸ in her thesis, 'Material Culture, Context and Meaning: A Critical Investigation of Museum Practice' (1991) and further essays such as 'Museum practice, material culture and the politics of identity' (1997), and 'Redressing the past: Integrating the Social History Collections at Iziko' (2005a).

In this thesis I draw on and work directly with selected sartorial objects from the three, previously segregated, collections. Almost two decades since the merger, and the 'dress', 'costume' and 'fashion' objects from these three collections remain largely siloed, leading to a series of sartorial dilemmas facing Iziko Museums pertaining to these collections and their integration, despite the museums' transformation efforts and commitment to redress. One such integration effort was the collation of all the sartorial artefacts into a single, custom-built storage and research facility. Fifteen thousand objects entered the storeroom from the ethnographic collections of the South African Museum, of which almost three-quarters is beadwork. A further twenty-five thousand items were unpacked, belonging to the Cultural History Museum collection, and lastly three thousand objects of adornment from the National Gallery will be moved into the storeroom as part of the final stages of the integration.⁵⁹

56 Many of these collections were packed away in storage since 2006, and at the time of this thesis (2014–2017), the final stages of unpacking were being addressed.

57 By contrast, museums in Australia and New Zealand have been collecting contemporary Australian and South Pacific sartorial artefacts since the mid-twentieth century. See Labrum's *Expanding fashion exhibition and theory: Fashion at New Zealand's national museum since 1950* (2014).

58 Although *dress/fashion* items are included in her discussions of material culture, these objects are not the primary focus of her research.

59 Resistance to receive the National Gallery's collection was voiced by both van Delen and Hosforth, while Kaufman describes the politics of 'our' collection and 'their' collection in an effort to demarcate aesthetic values, fearing a blurring of these distinctions in the shared storage.

The distinctions between the collections, as 'indigenous' or European were challenged when the objects were allocated object-specific storage facilities.⁶⁰ That these objects, from across the three collections, continue to show sustained, disciplinary divisions (and signs of colonial and racial distinctiveness), such as accessing the objects through their separate catalogues or separate collection managers, regardless of their shared material qualities, and despite the integration opportunities afforded by collaborations, new staff members or the new storage facility, reflects the rigidity, and tenacity of the original colonial and apartheid-driven, disciplinary frameworks. The 'resistance' of the *dress/fashion* collections to integrate, despite a range of institutional efforts, demands some enquiry.⁶¹

The enduring, and residual dispositions, values, ideologies, discourses and meanings that the objects, and the practitioners working with them have retained, and the perseverance of both cataloguing and exhibitionary practices, have resulted in a stasis across the objects, when compared to international developments in the curation of *dress/fashion*. Furthermore, in a postcolonial, post-apartheid South Africa, contemporary *dress/fashion* narratives reflect dynamic and complex engagements with a range entangled, sartorial histories. The perpetuation of uncritical, limited, and skewed South African *dress/fashion* histories presented in South African museums thus demands attention.

COLLECTING, CLASSIFYING AND CURATING *DRESS/FASHION* AT IZIKO MUSEUMS

Basu and de Jong identify the archive "as constituting a technology" that enabled the collection, storage, ordering, retrieval and exchange of knowledge (2016:5). In an effort to approach, investigate, and compare the three separate sartorial collections in this thesis, I consider their complex technologies, archival structures and the dynamics involved in bringing them together. I consider a set of specific museal practices, as three distinct phases to unpack the relationship between *dress/fashion* objects and museums, namely as the objects enter the museum (accession and collection), as they are ordered by and stored in the museum (classification), and as they are re-presented as knowledge objects by the museum (research and exhibition). Through a careful study of each phase across each of the three museums and their collections, I am able to address a range of similarities and differences, as well as their political, and ideological entanglement over time, and how these issues may have influenced the objects in these collections, both at the time of their accessioning, and in the present.

To begin, I interrogate the ways in which the three museums actively selected sartorial objects for their collection, as well as accepted donations and bequests of other objects, and how these items were accessioned. This chapter on collections is framed by the socio-political realities of South Africa over the last century, with a focus on periods of political change and their attendant shifting ideological emphases on, for example, empire building, apartheid racial segregation, or post-1994 democracies. I consider the ways in which accessioning and collection practices changed, or did not change, across the three museums during times of flux.

Through a series of close readings of objects in the collections,⁶² I explore the relationship between museum collections, notions of personhood, and practices of memory, agency and identity via the sartorial objects across these three collections. I use the readings as a critique of the distinct compositions and dispositions of the collections, and their contemporary affordances and limitations. The scope of sartorial objects and

60 June Hosford, personal interview, 26/06/17.

61 The Iziko Museums Annual Reports show effective 'transformation' as an institution, and acknowledge shifts in employment equities, educational outreach, audience diversification, acquisitions that fill the gaps, and curatorial collaborations, invitations and projects aimed at inclusivity and restorative engagement. My concern in this thesis lies with the objects, and related knowledge constructs, that have resisted 'transformation'.

62 I address this approach in the methodology section below.

their records, across the three collections, is a clear index of the political and ideological frameworks at play in the development of the three museums, and their locus in the contemporary imagination. I propose that the injustices, imbalances, inaccuracies, losses, and lacunae across the three collections impact on Iziko Museums' attempts to integrate their holdings.

Once the sartorial objects were identified as collectable, and entered the museum, they needed to be ordered, and classified. In the second chapter on when the sartorial objects are classified and ordered, I explore the ways in which the different sartorial taxonomies used across the three collections originated – determined by various disciplinary, ideological and technological frameworks – and how they evolved over time. In this way, I draw attention to the current difficulties faced by Iziko Museums in terms of the integration of the collections, resulting from the distinct languages governing dissimilar, similar and, sometimes almost identical, sartorial objects. The persistent division of the sartorial objects and their assignment to artificially constructed, often oppositional, identities such as tradition and modernity, history and culture, or masculine and feminine, reflects a range of ongoing disciplinary and epistemological structures at work within the separate arts, anthropological and costume taxonomies.

In the third phase of the objects' museumification, in the chapter on exhibitions, I consider the nature and role of museum displays in the presentation of sartorial histories and narratives, through a range of case studies of exhibitions across the three museum sites. In this way, I consider the terms of framing through various exhibitionary tropes; the use or absence of different body substitutes in the displays; the duration of the exhibition; and the institutional and curatorial approaches to notions of fashion, dress and adornment. I interrogate the effects of exhibitionary practices that enhanced divisions and reproduced stereotypes with regards to notions of tradition, modernity, agency, spectacle and aesthetics, further prompted by the choice of mannequin or body substitute, or lack thereof.

ON LOSS, LONGING AND LANGUAGE

In this interdisciplinary and multi-modal study across three separate museums, tracking three separate phases in the museumification of sartorial objects, I have chosen to work within three conceptual frameworks to contain the otherwise extensive and exponential concerns, issues and debates. The first of three conceptual frameworks that I employ in this study, is the concept of 'loss' that initially occurs when clothing enters the museum. This loss is twofold; firstly, the cleavage of the garment from a real or imagined wearer, and secondly, the severance from the context or the 'social situatedness' of the object. Sartorial objects in museums (whether in storage, as digital image, or on display), as de-contextualised and disembodied, are largely presented without the 'everyday' codes for reading such objects, namely without a social context and without the body of the owner or wearer. Often, the curation of *dress/fashion* in museum exhibitions aims to address these losses, firstly through the use of mannequins, figures or forms, and secondly through historical, thematic, or visual references in the displays (and/or catalogues) that provide contexts for the missing socio-cultural clues.

As many displays of *dress/fashion* represent objects of an 'other' time (such as period costume), or an 'other' place (exotic, folkloric or cultural dress practices), the terms and conditions of reading such objects are largely 'unfamiliar'. We are inducted into sartorial meaning systems via our own cultural orientations, social interactions, and wider influences of media, marketing and popular culture and contemporary literature. So, then, in a museum how do we read *dress/fashion* objects? Some sartorial items that carry meanings independent of the wearer and the social context, such as a pair of Levi 501 jeans, can be exhibited in museums without reference to signifiers of person or place. However, particular meanings of *dress/fashion* can be complemented, contradicted or challenged in museum displays by their embodiment – where the race, class or gender conforming, or non-conforming, identity of the wearer can shift the meaning of the *dress/fashion* object. The idea that worn clothing also bears the individuating traces of its wearer (such as scuffs,

smells and stains that become indices of the individual)⁶³ can invite closer readings of objects, as clues to phenomenological and subjective experiences of *dress/fashion*.

The second conceptual framework supporting this thesis relates to the notion of 'time'. The perception of 'fashion' as perpetually changing and always 'new' simultaneously and continuously historicises objects currently in 'fashion' as becoming last season, last decade and last century. In addition, a largely persistent representation of the 'fashion' system as a singularly Western phenomenon has meant that only Western fashion is seen to be changing, and always modern. 'Other,' largely non-Western, fashion systems are considered 'timeless', and deemed not fashion, but dress instead.⁶⁴ Evidence of the pervasiveness of these distinctions can be read in the example of the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art's exhibition *China: Through the Looking Glass* (2015) in New York. The collaboration between The Costume Institute and the museum's Department of Asian Art showed high fashion (Western) juxtaposed with *Chinese* costumes, paintings, porcelains, and *art*, exploring the enduring effect of 'unchanging' or 'timeless' *Chinese* aesthetics on 'changing' and 'modern' Western fashion.⁶⁵

Qualities of 'unchanging timelessness' as a guarantee of authenticity meant that only certain expressions of African fashion were welcomed in museums, while other sartorial expressions and practices that reflected modernity, innovation or change were largely disavowed. This meant that a vast array of South African sartorial histories never entered the museums in the past, including the hybrid, subcultural expressions of the *Swenkas* (discussed above), the *izikhotane*⁶⁶ and the *Smarteez*;⁶⁷ the more sophisticated, iconic and irreverent styles of celebrity musicians, Miriam Makeba or Brenda Fassie; or the revolutionary sartorial legacy of Nelson Mandela's fashioned life.⁶⁸

The third conceptual framework of this thesis involves 'language'. Colonial classifications based on linguistic research in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century contributed to the establishment of specific museum taxonomies for the objects of colonial subjects. 'Ethnic' identification would follow the indigenous sartorial object in its entry into museums, as well as its subsequent classification and circulation. Almost all indigenous material culture objects in museums were distinguished by 'ethnic' identities based on language associations to various indigenous clans or communities (Nettleton, 2013:36).

Furthermore, museums working with particular discursive frameworks developed and used specialist 'languages' with associated hierarchies for separate types of sartorial objects in their collections. Each of these languages would mark and mediate the objects in distinctive ways (Thiemeyer, 2015:396). Recent moves to 'digitise' museums, collections and knowledge resources have prompted new online documentation and accessibility challenges and concerns, particularly when

... online resources still mirror reality in many ways ... with inaccessible language, separate institutions framed within institutional taxonomies, or 'decontextualised' objects on digital platforms without the meaning that comes from seeing it alongside other artefacts of the same culture or idea (Trant, 2006:3).

63 A criminal conviction of a bank robber in Washington was based entirely evidence provided on closed circuit television footage that showed particular creases and wear-patterns of the suspect's jeans (Hauser, 2004). In other cases, DNA traces in the clothing of victims and/or perpetrators can lead to convictions.

64 The distinction of non-Western dress and Western fashion persists in museums and art institutions internationally and informs the key debate with regards new definitions of the fashion canon.

65 Current shifts in thinking about non-Western sartorial practices support the importance of this research, and the urgency to redress persistent, museal misrepresentations.

66 *Izikhotane* evolved in the East Rand townships of Johannesburg as an urban subculture largely expressed through expensive Italian fashion and street 'dance battles' that express wealth (Nkosi, 2011).

67 Founding members Floyd Avenue, *Kepi* Mngomezulu, *Sibu* Sithole and Thabo Tsatsinyane of the *Smarteez* embraced a born-free attitude, expressed through colourful modes of self-styling, mixing the past and the present to create new post-apartheid identities (King, 2015).

68 Professor Colin Bundy's lecture *Addressing Madiba* (26 April 2015) looks at the role of *dress/fashion* in relation to various moments in Mandela's life.

METHODOLOGY I: NARRATIVES AND COUNTER-NARRATIVES

As my investigation concerns three museum collections that hold considerable sartorial objects, namely, the South African Museum, the Cultural History Museum and the National Gallery, it is interdisciplinary. Although completed as a case study of the sartorial collections of Iziko Museums, I consider that a study of the collections of other mergers⁶⁹ or a study of a smaller, provincial museum would result in similar outcomes as wider South African socio-political and museal developments over time, most likely resulted in comparable collecting and exhibiting efforts.⁷⁰ This would exclude more recent museal developments, such as the Lwandle Museum⁷¹ and District Six Museum⁷² in Cape Town, or the Apartheid Museum⁷³ and Hector Pieterse Memorial⁷⁴ in Johannesburg. The thesis, although specific to Iziko Museums, therefore has relevance to a wider museological context in terms of the collecting and curating practices of South African museums, as well as in terms of demands for their redress, transformation, and diversification.

In an effort to investigate the institutional histories, developments and current dispositions across the three museums, I employed a range of approaches that included personal interviews with curators, scholars, dealers, historians, and current and past directors, as well as in-depth archival research in terms of documents, publications and newspaper clippings. I also investigated selected objects, their classifications, associated records and exhibition histories where applicable. I conducted site visits across the three museums, attended workshops and panel discussions in relation to South African museums, and maintained correspondence with academics and museum practitioners.

However, an important counter-narrative to the research findings of this case study needed to be developed. In the face of the many gaps in the collections, or the missing sartorial dialogues of Iziko Museums with a contemporary audience, or the absence of critical sartorial literacy in terms of museum practices, it was essential that I, at each stage of the research, included 'reflections' of these paucities, whether by best practices found in museums elsewhere, or as in the case of the Sartists, conceptual approaches to rethinking the sartorial 'differently' in related contexts. Some of this was facilitated by online research in terms of developments in the fashion industry, fashion academia, and fashion curation, while other research included travel and research visits. I attended a three-day research event *(Re)-Fashioning Masculinities: Identity, Difference, and Resistance* (2015) in Johannesburg, a doctoral research workshop *Fashion and the Body* in Stockholm (2016), a one-day seminar *Creating African Fashion Histories* in Brighton (2016), and a conference *Fashioning Museums* in Canberra, Australia (2017).

69 Following the restructuring process of national museums, the Museum of Military History, the Transvaal Museum of Natural History and the National Cultural History Museum merged to form the *Northern Flagship* in 1999, which was renamed *Ditsong: Museums of South Africa* in 2009.

70 Caledon Museum would be one example. Recently renamed a social history museum, the museum holds ethnographic items, cultural history collections, archaeological finds, archival documents, paintings, furniture and artworks. Leon Vorster, email correspondence, 26/07/16.

71 Former hostel dwellers participated in the curation of the Lwandle Museum (a former migrant labour hostel in the township, Lwandle about forty minutes from Cape Town) and in addition, contributed to the artefacts found there so as to ensure authenticity and accuracy. The museum collection also includes oral testimonies, research papers, video recorded testimonies and photographs of the landscape and the people dating from the 1960s to present day (Murray and Witz, 2014).

72 The District Six Museum opened in 1994, following a five-year period of projects that worked with the histories of District Six, the experiences of forced removal, and with memory and cultural expression as resources for solidarity and restitution (Rassool, 2006:9).

73 The Apartheid Museum opened in 2001 and commemorates the lives of those who suffered under the apartheid regime. Passes arbitrarily assign visitors "not an individual identity but a racial group – black or white – which dictates which entrance they must use to go into the museum", and ubiquitous signs that served to keep races apart are used in the museum (Rankin, 2013:85). These signs are some of the few actual artefacts of apartheid in the museum; instead new forms of heritage display are used throughout the museum, such as mirrors, video installations, sculpture and audio-recordings.

74 The *Hector Pieterse Memorial and Museum* at Orlando West in Soweto opened in 2002. Although there are insufficient objects available for the museum to tell the story of the death of Hector Pieterse, (remembered as the first victim of the Soweto Uprising of 16 June 1976), the museum supplements the iconic press photograph, with both original and new video footage, and some damaged banners and school desks (Rankin, 2013:82).

METHODOLOGY II: A TROUSER LENS

An important criterion of this thesis is the fashion-led methodology, and the ways in which this approach may reveal or offer new understandings, reflections or interpretations in terms of the objects themselves, but also in terms of museum practices and perceptions. A focus on the materiality of *dress/fashion* has long been central to historical and anthropological studies⁷⁵ as sartorial objects clearly document and demonstrate issues, such as status, socio-cultural exchange, new developments in technology, or shifting notions of gender, culture and class. In addition, in this thesis, I use the fashion-led interrogation of the objects as a means to also reflect on the conditions, dispositions and histories of the museums themselves, or to bring to light some of “the repressed histories as well as the inherent power-knowledge systems at play within museums” (Ring Petersen, 2014:131).

With the exception of ‘unworn’ sartorial objects that enter museum collections, all *dress/fashion* artefacts found in museums have at some stage marked a boundary between self and other, between private and public, and between individual and society. The connection between the personal, as embodied, and larger social structures, imbues *dress/fashion* objects with important archival potential. Authors, Alexandra Kim and Ingrid Mida consider these qualities across a range of close object readings or case studies in *The Dress Detective* (2015). Jean Allman, in *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress*, explores the uniquely multivalent political capacities of dress and fashion, as alternative archive, to foreground multiple themes from “class, generation, and race to ethnicity, citizenship, nation, and transnationalism” (2004:5).

Close readings of objects, or ‘object biographies’ as Igor Kopytoff identifies them, can “make salient what might otherwise remain obscure ... [and can often] reveal a tangled mass of aesthetic, historical and even political judgments” (Kopytoff, 1986:67). Bearing this in mind and prompted by a return to the practice of ‘close reading,’ the postgraduate History of Art project, *Object Biographies* was initiated in 2013 at the University of the Witwatersrand,⁷⁶ in an effort to “engage with the gaps, silences and absences of a range of museum objects” (Brenner et al, 2015:14). Grappling with the lack of biographical details, as is common with many African objects, the project aimed to “reconstruct multiple narratives: those embedded in the object itself that prompt enquiries about the various decisions taken in the initial production of the piece; and those narratives that attach to the physical journey that each object has taken to ‘land’ on a particular shelf” (ibid.). In addition, the double-volume publication, *Tribing and Untribing the Archive: Identity and the Material Record in Southern KwaZulu-Natal in the Late Independent and Colonial Period* (2016), presented a range of critical approaches so to,

... probe how things were framed in institutions named ‘archives’ and ... how other things, many of them designated ‘tribal’, were exiled from those institutions ... [yet] are available for recuperation as resources that inspire, illuminate and enable thinking about the past (Hamilton & Liebhammer, 2016:14)

In much the same way, I am confronted with almost fifty thousand objects with scant details provided in terms of makers, wearers or museal motivations in many cases in this study of three sartorial collections. Questions such as, who wore the garments, who made them, when were these items worn, why did they end up in this museum collection, how do they relate to other items in this collection, and other collections, and how did they relate to other sartorial objects before they entered the museum, remain unanswered. Secondly, where do I begin to make a selection of items to work with and what kind of selection could afford the most effective or productive assessment approach?

75 This includes amongst others, Arjun Appadurai’s *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (1988), Alfred Gell’s *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (1998) and Daniel Miller’s *Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter* (1998) and *Stuff* (2010).

76 Students wrote biographies of museum objects in collaboration with the Wits Art Museum. The research resulted in a series of exhibitions and books: *Lifelines*, 2014 (Brenner et al. 2014), *Life–Line–Knot*, 2015 (Brenner et al. 2015a), and *Lifescapes*, 2017 (Brenner et al. 2016).

I needed a selection that would best facilitate a reading across the three collections, allowing for a range of comparative observations to be made (of scale, scope and type of objects in each collection), as well as an analysis of various museum practices in the three museums that governed the objects before the merger, namely the South African Museum, the Cultural History Museum and the National Gallery, and continue to do so since the merger, in Iziko Museums. I chose to use a single object strategy – seeking out every single one of a particular type of ‘object’ found across all three collections. In this way, I would be able to assess different practices, values and ideologies at work at each phase of the various objects’ journeys from accessioning, through classification, and into display across the three museums.

I chose to identify all the trousers in the collections as my single *dress/fashion* object focus.⁷⁷ This ‘trouser-lens’ strategy facilitated “a new way of approaching the collections” (Henare et al, 2007:2). Curators Judith Clark and Amy de la Haye similarly attest that their investigation of one ensemble – a dashing evening pajamas suit⁷⁸ – enabled “more expansive historical narratives and museological discourses” to emerge (Clark, et. al., 2014:77). The ‘trouser-lens’ furthermore afforded opportunities to investigate some of the conspicuously ‘contested’, demarcated notions of ownership, expression and social rules inherent to the object – the most obvious expression of this being, ‘who wears the pants’. Art historian, Thomas Da Costa Kaufmann presented *Tales of Trousers: Global Costume, Global History, and the Global History of Art* (2018) at Harvard Art Museums in which he suggested that documents, works of art, and actual surviving elements of clothing, offer a stimulus for writing about global and art history *differently*.⁷⁹

Although a distinction is made between ‘trousers’ as outerwear and ‘pants’ as underwear in British English, the American use of ‘pants’, and English use of ‘trousers’ refer to items of clothing worn from the waist to the ankles, covering both legs separately, rather than with cloth extending across both legs as in robes, skirts, and dresses (ICOM, n/d.). In this thesis, I use the two terms interchangeably, as both terms are used in the collection records, and both terms are used in South African fashion media, retail and design practices. I included catsuits, overalls and shorts in my survey of pants in the collections, as bifurcated outerwear items, but excluded swimwear and all forms of underwear.

I did consider the limitations of choosing trousers and not another *dress/fashion* item as my research lens. As postcolonial theorist, Gayatri Spivak cautions, the colonial subaltern always wears the skirt, wrap or uncut cloth, while those in power wear tailored clothes or trousers (1988). This bias towards a Western patriarchy associated with the wearing of trousers, is reflected in this thesis – the largely colonial collections of the ethnographic museum, the conservative and racially skewed cultural history collections, and the representation of trousers in the canon of art and art history all replicate the ideological construct of trousers as a Western fashion object. This construct is however, productive in this study as evidence of the hegemonies and dominant political rhetoric of modernity, within both museal and fashion systems. More so, this bias acts as evidence of the constructed nature of knowledge that positions and perpetuates particular personhoods for particular end purposes.

What the ‘trouser-led’ strategy facilitated was, firstly a reflection on what was collected, where and when; how it was classified; and, in what ways it has or has not been displayed. Secondly, this lens helped identify lacunae in the collections;⁸⁰ where the boundaries or acts of gatekeeping in acquisition and classification structures occurred; and how the particular constructs of knowledge and identity narratives were produced in the exhibitions. Thirdly, the focus on one object type enabled a critique of various museum practices and

77 An in-depth discussion on trousers, their histories and gendered, cultural and colonial constructs is offered in the following chapter.

78 The suit was designed by Chanel for Autumn/Winter 1937–8, ordered and worn by Diana Vreeland, who had preserved it for over thirty years when she presented it to Cecil Beaton for the exhibition, *Fashion: An Anthology by Cecil Beaton* (1971) at the V&A Museum, London (Clark, et. al., 2014:77).

79 Da Costa Kaufmann’s previous lectures include *Tales of Trousers and other Things: A World History of Costume?* and *Who wore Pants? Connecting Global History and Global History of Art* held at Linking Cloth – Clothing Globally Symposium 2 and 3 in 2017.

80 Similarly, in a podcast titled *When Women Wore the Trousers*, de la Haye identifies the lacunae in British museums, ascribing a current surge in eBay sales of authentic workwear as a response to the lack of occupational dress in collections, such as miners, fishermen, traffic police uniforms (2017).

dispositions, including the ways in which these were raced and classed; a critique of museums as sites of avowal and disavowal, validation and discrimination; and, lastly an interrogation of the ways in which various acts of epistemic violence continue to mark the sartorial in museum collections and exhibitions.

Via this focus, I was able to identify just over one hundred and twenty items pairs of trousers or pants out of a fifty thousand-strong object collection. Although small, this sample facilitated a number of observations. This included critical reflections on the histories and dispositions of the collections and the related museum practices; readings of past politics of *dress/fashion* in South Africa and their present repercussions and reproductions; and, explorations of the socio-political flux of identity constructions via the sartorial exhibitions in museums. This strategy could have employed skirts⁸¹ – including aprons, wraps and loincloths – or hats – including head-wraps, beaded headpieces, caps, beanies, hats and headscarves – in a similar assessment and critique of the collection practices, classification structures and curatorial approaches. Although some of the specific contestations and applications (of wearing, modes of self expression, and gender, cultural and social codes) would differ, I propose that the capacity to track and trace the effects of the histories and dispositions, as well as the capacity to critique museal practices, would be similar.

In the close readings of the disparate selected objects from the museums' holdings, I explored aspects of each object interpretatively, in an effort to at times fill in the gaps, and at other times, to re-imagine the wearers, makers, and socio-cultural contexts of the objects.⁸² The series of 'sartorial readings' in this thesis thus span a range of bifurcated objects, and ideas about dressing, wearing and self-fashioning, as well as memory, history, nostalgia and social agency. Included are various beaded trousers or *ibulukwe* found in separate collections; a pair of navy blue, tailored woman's slacks from the 1940s; a pair of 1970s khaki, polyester trousers belonging to a university librarian; brightly coloured satin pants from a 'Kaapse Klopse' Carnival⁸³ costume; and, a sequined, green designer catsuit.

In order to facilitate the critical work of this research strategy in relation to the three museums in this study, and to explore the tensions between their collections and practices, I brought the objects into dialogue with each other through a series of sartorial readings that cross-cut the empirical research. I used the filmic application of 'cross-cutting' or parallel editing here, whereby 'scenes' that seem unrelated or separate are linked, or where a new or different narrative is inserted into the main narrative. This move allowed me to interrupt the museal narratives, and practices with a range of new thinking tools, to demonstrate alternate approaches to or understandings of the sartorial objects in South African museums.

Finally, as this thesis relies on a critical interrogation of sartorial objects, I forefront the role of the body in relation to these objects and the affordances that an affective turn can offer museum practitioners, collectors and curators to reframe, remediate, re-script or re-imagine their *dress/fashion* collections, classifications and exhibitions.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES: FASHION THINKING, EMBODIMENT AND THE ARCHIVE

Three theoretical approaches converge in this study. The first theoretical approach, fashion thinking, draws into this museum case study a discursive field that simultaneously interrupts and unsettles the museological field (Riegels Melchior, 2014:2–3). Fashion thinking as a strategy of analysis "holds the potential for new ways

81 A skirt-lens would have offered this thesis an inverse of the male-gendered starting point. However my argument uses notions of gender as a construct, to interrogate the collections, their histories and formations and either a female-centric or male-centric construct would have been productive. Thus the trouser approach is a heuristic device.

82 In a similar way, curators, academics and collectors aiming to reframe their large and diverse collections 'through the lens of design, selected various objects from their collections, to think differently about categories of design, art and ethnography in a project *Design Beyond the West* (2017, ongoing) at the Research Centre for Material Culture in Amsterdam.

83 I discuss this event and related costume in detail in Chapter Three.

of analysing the material objects, and [related] social and cultural practices” (Peterson, Mackinney-Valentin & Riegels Melchior, 2016:2). Fashion theorists Annelike Smelik and Agnes Rocamora argue for the application of a range of critical and conceptual theories as new approaches to reading both the material and symbolic notions of the sartorial in *Thinking Through Fashion* (2005).

In this thesis I draw on the relatively young field of fashion studies that has emerged in the last thirty years. Fashion studies embraces and incorporates methodologies and approaches from diverse disciplines such as history, anthropology, art and literature, psychology, sociology, politics and economics, and is as such interdisciplinary. Fashion scholar Efrat Tseelon broadly identifies the field as “the study of beauty, fashion, and dress as material and visual evidence of social and economic processes, or as an object of contemplation, reflection and change” (2012:12). Working in fashion education for almost fifteen years, I developed a working outline of fashion studies as a field that examines the historical and cultural contexts of the dress body, to interrogate both the politics of dress and the body, as well as the politics of fashioned identities and modernities using textual, visual and material sources.⁸⁴

Clark describes de la Haye and Wilson’s *Defining Dress: Dress as Object, Meaning and Identity* (1991) as an effort to position critical fashion studies as a field, one that has repeatedly been described as marginalised within both academia and museology (Clark, 2001:230). The three categories – meaning, identity and object – of thinking about and defining *dress/fashion* are not divisive, argues Clark, but rather promote increasingly integrated methodologies or an interdisciplinarity that suggests that the “answers may lie at the interstices” (ibid.). This capacity for interdisciplinarity proves a crucial tool in this thesis as the case study investigating three distinct collections that adhere to three distinct disciplines, namely ethnography, history and fine arts requires reading, both across and between the objects from the three collections.

The sartorial objects – in this thesis the trousers – become a ‘travelling concept’ that moves between the disciplines, as cultural theorist and critic, Mieke Bal suggests. Migrating concepts are important tools in addressing interdisciplinary research (Bal, 2002:5). Editor Heike Jenss identifies a similar, interdisciplinary range of practices used in fashion studies that includes material culture research methods, ethnographic approaches, and a combination of the two, as mixed methods in *Fashion Studies Research Methods, Sites and Practices* (2016). Fashion thinking in this thesis therefore allows me to approach the selected *dress/fashion* objects using a variety of methods (from biography through to ethnography, and from speculative through to material readings) so as to elicit a range of responses that proffer insight into the objects themselves, as well as offer a lens into the museal practices that govern and divide them.

The second theoretical approach in this study, supports Entwistle’s argument that calls for a more dynamic and discursive role of the body in relation to the sartorial as “a socially situated, bodily practice” (2000a:323). The body, and its presentations, constitute a dialectical cultural sign encoding simultaneously the material and the socially constructed, the personal and the collective, the visual and the conceptual (Tseelon, 2012:12). Entwistle reiterates, “dress is an embodied practice within the social world and fundamental to microsocial orders” (2000:324–325). The intimate relationship between the sartorial object and the body of the wearer is central to the argument of this thesis. As Entwistle attests,

... dress cannot be understood without reference to the body and while the body is always (and everywhere) to be dressed, there has been a surprising lack of concrete analysis of the relationship between them (2000:324).

Distinct, disciplinary forms of collection, classification and curation in museums has meant that information about owners or wearers, or the embodied subjectivities of sartorial objects, is often skewed. Ethnographic collections globally have scant owner information, let alone details of wearers, and/or the wearing of sartorial objects in their collections. Beadwork, for example was collected and only on occasion did the provenance

84 LISOF School of Fashion, Johannesburg (1998–2013).

include the name of the maker (often not the same person as the wearer). Largely these collections of sartorial objects were collected with information scientifically gathered – what type of people wore this, what kind of event required this form of dress, what cultural practice does the garment or object represent. This information was not about the individual who wore it, their subjectivity or their positionality – qualities that were disavowed and disremembered.

By inviting the absent body into the museal object, a range of social, cultural and physical remembrances are made possible, both materially and symbolically at the time of their acquisition and since, in the ways in which many of the disavowals continue to mark the objects in the present. Entwistle and Wilson argue that *dress/fashion* “marks out particular kinds of bodies ... in this way it can tell us a lot about the body in culture” (2001:4). In this thesis, I invert this to suggest that bodies can equally mark out the sartorial, and that by thinking through the body, we can come to understand *dress/fashion* objects differently.

The third theoretical approach draws on the rethinking material culture as archive. First presented in *Uncertain Curature: In and out of the archive* (2014:155–6), and further developed in *Tribing and Untribing: Identity and the Material Record in Southern KwaZulu-Natal in the Late Independent and Colonial Period*, Hamilton and Leibhammer explore the productive possibilities of objects of material culture when reframed as archival, for redressing gaps in histories of the past (2016:413). I am interested in the ways in which the sartorial objects in the three previously segregated collections, when made to work as archives, produce new approaches to the understanding of South African sartorial histories and contribute to new curatorial methodologies and terminologies in South African museums.

Hamilton and Leibhammer suggest a two-pronged strategy towards breaking the classificatory binds that render material culture objects largely mute in museums. Firstly, they propose a range of visual strategies to “present material objects not as the representative traditional items of a ‘tribal’ society, but as materials with which to think about the past and how it has been, and is being constructed” (Hamilton and Leibhammer, 2016:9). Secondly, they argue for the importance of “investing in the research necessary to frame collected material culture as archival ... [so as to] reconstruct the *archival histories* of these materials” (italics in original, 2016:413).

Marie Grace Brown’s reading of the traditional *tobe* or cloth wrapper as ‘archive’ places the object centrally in her research in terms of the role and record of women, women’s bodies, and women’s activities in the first half of the twentieth century in Sudan. Brown explains “*tobes* are records of both national and personal history, which were “touched, desired, and consciously worn on display” (2017:177). Brown’s study shows how non-traditional sources can and do supplement the archive in ways that honour practices and experiences not recorded elsewhere. The selected trousers from the collections offer different positions of engagement with the material cultures of their wearers and their socio-political contexts, and thus invite investigation into the productive possibilities for rethinking and redressing knowledge about the past. When reframed as archival sources, objects such as the trousers “would re-enter the world laden with an enhanced potential for enabling thinking about the past ... and [made] available for engagement in the present” (Hamilton and Leibhammer, 2016:214). Allman argues that in studies of power, the sartorial presents “an enormously valuable, yet largely untapped, archive (2004:4).

An earlier set of linked concepts – developed by Hamilton and mobilised in relation to archives – introduced firstly, the concept of ‘backstory,’ reaching back from the moment the record entered the archive (however, determined by the status of that archive), and secondly, the concept of ‘biography,’ which concerned “the period from when the material [was] first engaged with a view to it entering some form of recognised preservatory housing” (2011:327). I employed these linked concepts in relation to the *dress/fashion* objects in the museum collections when comparing disparate records of similar objects across the collections, and disparate values – marked by absence or presence – placed on individual and collective identities.

These strategies suggest that a rethinking of sartorial objects in museums as archive is necessary, and possible too, for redressing knowledge about the past. In other words, *dress/fashion* objects in the museums can offer more than an aesthetic register (for example, beautiful beadwork examples at an art gallery), historical referent (such as a period costume ensemble in a house museum), or 'tribal' identity (as tokenistic representations of ethnic diversity). These objects 're-read' in the present can and do carry "repertoires of action latent in the archives, [that] are being reconfigured to imagine decolonial futures" (Basu & de Jong, 2016:5).

These three theoretical approaches informed this close study of the conditions and dispositions of and future possibilities for sartorial objects in South African museum collections, by forging an interdisciplinary methodology. I use these three approaches to critique both what these objects are and what they could be, as well as what they did and what they can do, in the museums in this study.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The thesis presents a dual narrative, with the body of the thesis divided into three chapters each addressing a distinct, yet inter-related, phase of the sartorial objects in the museum, that is crosscut with reflective and interpretative trouser-led observations. In each chapter, I explore the same three museum collections and practices in the same order, and address their particular histories and dispositions with a focus on the formation, organisation, evolution and curation of the sartorial in their holdings. The trouser-led explorations bring the sartorial objects into dialogue with these diverse museal practices and their histories. The first trouser-led foray is a descriptive record of all the trousers currently in the Iziko Museums' collections, supported by photographs of a selection of these objects.

In Chapter One, I explore the historical development and key characteristics of each of the three collections, paying close attention to how these collections developed (pertaining specifically to the sartorial), and how the distinct, disciplinarily-determined collection practices evolved through the twentieth, and into the twenty-first, century. This chapter is interpolated with a series of wider socio-political reflections of *dress/fashion* narratives in South Africa beyond the museum. A series of sartorial readings of selected trousers in the collections offer a range of reflections on, and critiques of the injustices, imbalances, inaccuracies and lacunae across the three collections. Working closely with Entwistle's concept of *dress/fashion* as a socially situated, embodied practice, I discuss diverse notions of identity, power, loss, longing and belonging, as well as issues of marginality, memory, history and agency in relation to South African sartorial histories and notions of representation in the museums' collections.

In Chapter Two, I discuss the three classificatory systems that organise and govern the sartorial objects across the three collections. I explore the way in which the taxonomies, determined by their various disciplinary, ideological and technological frameworks, originated, and how they evolved over time, drawing attention to the current difficulties faced by Iziko Museums in terms of the merging, integration and digitisation of the collections. I pay attention to "the effects of ideas about tribe on the archive" (Hamilton & Liebhammer, 2016:13), as this divisive binary of tradition versus modernity is evident across all three classificatory frameworks. In the second sequence of the close sartorial readings of selected pants in, and absent from the collections, I interrogate the different structures, languages and knowledge constructs operating within each of museum's taxonomies. The persistent divisions of sartorial objects and bodies, through their assignment to artificially constructed, and largely classed and raced identities reflect the ongoing epistemological violence of classification on *dress/fashion* objects.

In Chapter Three, I analyse a range of sartorial exhibitions across the three museums. I explore the specific use, or absence of, different body substitutes such as body casts and mannequins, in the displays and show how these representational tropes of race, culture, and gender frame the sartorial in particular ways. I consider the impact of time, as well as the curatorial, institutional and disciplinary relationship to, and understanding of,

notions of fashion, dress and adornment across the three museums. In the final sartorial readings of selected pants in, or absent from, the exhibitions, I use these 'reflections' to consider the limits, disavowals, and framing of the sartorial in museum displays. I furthermore interrogate the effects of display practices – prompted by the choice of mannequin or body substitute, or lack there-of – that continue notions of segregation and reproduce stereotypes with regards to tradition, modernity, agency, spectacle and aesthetics.

In my Conclusion, I present the results of my investigation of the particular stasis pertaining to the *dress/fashion* objects in the Iziko Museums collections. The disciplinary effects (of exclusions, marginalisations and skewed representations) as enacted upon the objects at their entry into, and in their ongoing lives within the museums limit, yet also afford, new capacities for 'thinking the collections' differently. When understood as embodied and material notions of identity, as objects of 'fashion', the affordances within the sartorial objects in the collections suggest important conceptual modes towards rethinking sartorial archives, re-fashioning the sartorial pasts, and re-imagining sartorial futures from within the museum itself.

Records & Objects: Trousers in the Textile Store

ABSENT BODIES AND SUSPENDED TIME

The air was heavy with the scent of suede emanating from a pair of dark brown, buffed, hand-stitched suede shorts. This pair was one of the disparate sartorial objects temporarily taken from their specially consigned conservation cabinets as part of my initial collections' research.⁸⁵ The pungent presence of the short leather pants from Maun in the Okavango, Botswana, filled the air. The pair, "made in a western style," was one of a number of trousers readied for my research visit selected from the South African Museum's collection.⁸⁶

The windowless, air-conditioned, and temperature controlled, state-of-the-art Textile Store embodies the Iziko Museums' integration and transformation efforts and, since its opening in 2010, has become home to all the textiles-based collections⁸⁷ of the former South African Museum, the Cultural History Museum and National Gallery. I was assisted in the store by anthropology collections curator, Gerald Klinghardt and volunteer, June Hosford, who assisted in the ongoing unpacking, photographing, assessing, conserving and storing of the collections since 2008.⁸⁸ The move to integrate physically the various collections of the museums had begun in 2006, and represented an important and "useful way of breaking away from the inherited patterns of separate ethnography and 'white' colonial cultural history", explains then Director of Social History Collection, Lalou Meltzer (cited in Duggan and Kashe-Katiya, 2010).⁸⁹

There is much to be said about the unpacking of objects. Homi Bhabha speaks to chance encounters that produce "dialectical tensions between the poles of order and disorder" in his essay *Unpacking my library... again*⁹⁰ (Bhabha 1996:199). He asks that we momentarily participate in these tensions (ibid.). On the day that I viewed the first selected pairs of trousers for my research, I too noted 'tensions'. Three pairs of highly decorated, beaded trousers or *ibulukwe*⁹¹ had been carefully removed from the crisp, blank, white archival tissue paper of their storage. The trousers, having belonged to pre-initiate male youths aged between fourteen and eighteen, shared the table with the work-in-progress of the day. The ongoing task of 'unpacking the collections' included the careful unpacking, and digital recording on this day, of one of seven large boxes of christening gowns in all shades of white, cream, off-white and beige. These delicate artefacts in cotton, lace, anglaise and linen, store in their folds, very different embodied notions of ritual, rites of passage and forms of nostalgia, from the rural experiences of the beaded trousers, whose embodied performances were evident in the very noticeable scuffs, stains, and signs of wear and tear.

The Textile Store, where conservation and preservation is upheld to 'suspend' the impact of time, decay and ageing, is a place of gloved movements and careful handling. The suspension of time also keeps the outside, worldly realities away. The selected trousers, and the large, labelled, flat, brown cardboard boxes being unpacked on the day of my visit,⁹² were surrounded by tissue papers, floor-to-ceiling drawers of all sizes, two small filing cabinets,⁹³ two work desks, chairs, cardboard rolls, tape, gloves, and three, long, large, white work tables.

85 Numerous research visits were made to the Textile Store between November 2014 and May 2017.

86 SAM12176, purchased in 1981.

87 By definition of 'textiles' all cultural objects in the collections of or with a 'material-thread' base will eventually be collated in the Textile Store. Van Delen, personal interview, 16/11/14.

88 Retired conservator Hosford worked as a volunteer assisting with 'unpacking of the boxes'. Hosford, personal interview, 26/07/17.

89 A further, simultaneous project of digitising of the various museums' collections is underway with about 30–40 000 items already on the database of Iziko Museums, excluding Archaeology has approximately 200 000 items. Lailah Hasham, personal interview, 17/03/15.

90 Bhabha (1996:199) borrows from Walter Benjamin's original essay *Unpacking my library* (1931).

91 SAM14035, SAM14268, and SAM14394.

92 Many boxes moved between storerooms – some were packed more than thirty years ago, and some packed more recently for the merger in the late 1990s. Van Delen, personal interview, 14/11/14.

93 Considering the importance of this catalogue cabinet as the archive of information of the objects in the collections, it is a surprisingly, unpretentious and simple item of furniture, reminiscent more of its past setting, than fitting into this highly designed and streamlined context.

Wieke van Delen, then Cultural History Museum curator, joined us as further items of the day's research were laid out on the table. I had selected nine pairs of trousers from across the various collections and categories. The trousers lay on the table as empty, sartorial skins. Stallybrass suggests that material artefacts bear the imprint of the bodies that wore them, leaving behind a ghostly presence (2012:69). Yet, identity too, is largely accomplished through *dress/fashion*. This marks the sartorial as the site of the construction of social, cultural, gendered and professional identities. Seen now, disembodied on the table, I search the material surfaces, shapes and textures, for traces of the individuals who had once embodied them, and the lives they may have lived. The disparate range of the sartorial objects and their imagined wearers, in this encounter in the Textile Store, reflects dialectical tensions that Bhabha addresses above. The temporarily shared Textile Store moment (of my research), brought together the otherwise culturally divided, historically distanced, and socially segregated lives of the nine trousers and the numerous, embroidered christening gowns, spread out on the table.

I used the single focus of trousers in this study to track their appearance across the collections, draw comparisons, identify absences, and assess the acquisition records, processes and practices. In addition, as a fashion designer, historian and theorist, I was able to locate these trousers within broader social, political, historical, technological, cultural and gendered frameworks. Furthermore, I was able to reflect on the impact of these shifting and complex contexts on the objects, on their wearers or owners, and on the museums themselves.

CULTURE, GENDER AND CLASS CONTESTATIONS

The history of trousers is one of contestation in terms of a range of divisions spanning gender, class, religion and culture. The social prohibitions of the wearing of trousers are well expressed in a single verse from a poem entitled 'Hints to young ladies' in the *Cape Literary Gazette* in 1835 marking the arrival in Cape Town of the feminine fashion known as *pantalets* –

For beaux advance with curious care
To all fair ones who trousers wear,
The cause of which on this fact hitches –
Those who wear trousers *may wear breeches* (1835:103, cited in Robinson 1962:112)

Just over thirty years earlier, the lives of those individuals wearing breeches⁹⁴ (namely, men in power) had been threatened and overturned by the trouser-wearing proletariat, or *sans culottes*⁹⁵ during the French Revolution (1789–1799). Trousers, the political symbol of the working class at the beginning of the nineteenth century, had by the end of that century become the sole domain of menswear. Attempts at dress reform, to advocate trousers for women at this time, only saw significant results after each of the two World Wars, where pants for western women slowly became acceptable to varying degrees.⁹⁶

However, contrary to the largely, Western-centric narratives of pants, the oldest known trousers were found at the Yanghai cemetery in Western China, dating from almost three thousand years ago (Thurman, 2014). Furthermore, trousers were worn by both sexes both in the Middle East and the Roman Empire about two thousand years ago, before it was decreed by Roman councils that draped clothing would represent 'civilisation' and trousers were deemed barbaric (Entwhistle, 2000b:140). The impact of trouser-wearing Persian, Indian, and Arab traders in the eighth century, who used Zanzibar as a base for voyages between the

94 Knee-breeches were knee-length trousers worn exclusively by men in Europe, and by European and other men in the colonies, from the late sixteenth to the early nineteenth century.

95 Peasants and lower-class men, who could not wear knee-breeches and were therefore known as the *sans-culottes*, literally 'without breeches,' participated in the French Revolution in response to their poor quality of life in late seventeenth century.

96 One third of the essays in *Was it Something I Wore?* (2012) feature questions in relation to the wearing trousers (or not) within certain professions, religions and cultures.

Middle East, India, and Africa, resulted in the development of a “style of ruffled trousers and matching blouses worn by the Swahili women,” as noted in historic photographs from East Africa in the late nineteenth century (Messynessy, 2018).

However, the more dominant narrative is one largely based on religious grounds, where women were punished, with imprisonment or death, when caught wearing trousers. This was the case of the first woman in Puerto Rico to wear trousers in public, Luisa Capetillo in 1919, as well as, a hundred years later in 2017, when twenty-four Sudanese women, caught wearing trousers at a party in Khartoum, were charged with indecency following article 152 of the criminal code, which applies to ‘indecent acts’ in public, wearing an ‘obscene outfit’ or ‘causing an annoyance to public feelings’ (Difazio, 2017).

The words of warning of sartorial change in the Cape Gazette in 1835 (noted above) closely followed the abolition of slavery in 1834 in the Cape. Former African-American slave, Bert Frederick, recalled the lack of trousers in his youth where ‘I wore jes’ a long shirt ‘twel I was a big scamp more dan twelve years old.’⁹⁷ This meant that not only were women seen to be adopting clothing pertaining to men, but freed slaves could adopt the fashions of their masters with the relaxation of sumptuary laws that had for so long been used to “entrench social order,” and where clothing had particular capacities for marking out social significance and rank (Randle, 2010:230). Kirsten Mckensie describes the notion of status when performed on the body (largely through dress), as a “slippery commodity” after emancipation, where social rituals of distinction became blurred in colonial cities such as Cape Town (2004:66).

NAVIGATING THE COLLECTIONS VIA THE TROUSERS

In my effort to interrogate the collections, I endeavored to identify all the pairs of trousers across the three collections of this study. I recognise that my trouser research may be incomplete, and some pairs may have evaded my various searches altogether due to a range of influences, including missing cards or accession record entries, cataloguing errors or ambiguities, or delays in the unpacking of the collections.⁹⁸ I present here a descriptive list of every pair of trousers that I found in my research – around one hundred and twenty-five pairs of trousers out of approximately forty thousand sartorial objects.

What follows is a descriptive narrative of each of these pairs of pants, constructed strictly from the terms used and the content provided in the accession cards and register records. I closely followed the information provided in each case as it appeared in the record, generally working from the top of each card, and used the actual terms and descriptions provided as the content for my own descriptions below. Any additional information that I contributed to the description is added in brackets with *my comment* in italics. Throughout, I list the trousers chronologically in relation to their acquisition by the museums, and not by their own chronologies, which would offer a different set of observations. My focus on the related museum practices meant that the museum’s ‘chronology’ was useful in that it reflected a range of political and ideological decisions made that resulted in the disparate collections.

TROUSERS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM COLLECTION (9)

Out of almost fifteen thousand items of adornment, I found only nine pairs of trousers in the South African Museum’s ethnographic collection.⁹⁹ My search was simple, effectively aided by the dual index system of the collection’s cataloguing system where all the objects are indexed by both tribal identification, and object type.

97 Frederick was interviewed as part of *Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States* (often referred to as the WPA Slave Narrative Collection) that was a massive compilation of histories by former slaves undertaken by the Federal Writers’ Project of the Works Progress Administration from 1936 to 1938.

98 The list that follows was compiled after about six months of weekly research visits to the museums – where I did this and this and this to make sense of the collections.

99 15 000 pieces – about 12 000 beadwork items; accessories and dress items make up the remaining 3000 items. Gerald Klinghardt, personal interview, 26/04/16.

I found all nine pairs of trousers following a pale blue card with the handwritten heading 'Pants' in the small, wooden catalogue cabinet in the first-floor offices of the Iziko Museums Social History Collections Manager. The earliest pair of pants acquired by the museum has an accession number unlike any other accession number of the three museums I explored in this study, MUSEUMS/65/17. It is a pair of Tswana skin pants from Mpupoble, also known as *borokgwe* from the collection of B.J. van Niekerk. The next pair of trousers is SAM11425, also described as *borokgwe*, and made of sheep or goat-skin by Phodiso Setshegele from Rolong, Mabule in the Molopo area, Bophuthatswana. The card claims that these are still worn in this area according to informants. This pair was purchased on a SAM Expedition in July 1978 for R28,00. An extra, pencilled note reads, 'for method of dressing skin see field card 27.7.78'. The third pair of pants, SAM12176 is a pair of short leather pants (see Figure 1), made in a western style from Maun in the Okavango, Botswana, was purchased from the Dr. Casaleggio Collection in September 1981. A pair of black cotton trousers, SAM12402 is a pair of trousers also known as *ekerbey*, from Mali and indentified as Taureg that were made in Gao and purchased from Dr A. Smith in January 1982.



Figure 1. SAM12176: Short Suede Pants. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.



Figure 2. SAM14035: Beaded Khaki Shorts. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

The next four pairs of trousers in the catalogue cabinet are all similar in style. SAM14035 is a 'Xhosa' pair of pants or *ibulukwe* (see Figure 2), from Mzantsi, King Williams Town in the Ciskei. The manufactured khaki shorts for a young boy are decorated with beads (dark blue, turquoise, white, pink, red), the zip is broken, and the beadwork is damaged. They were purchased from collector Stephen Long in March 1991. SAM14268 is a 'Xhosa' pair of pants or *ibulukwe* (see Figure 3), from Ndevana. These store-bought, lined black short pants are decorated back and front with white buttons and white and turquoise beads. The pair of shorts with torn stitching and cloth 'was worn by boys', and sold by Nosiseko Mfa to collector Stephen Long, from whom the museum purchased them in August 1992. An additional note points to other items presumably sold by Nosiseko Mfa: "see SAM 14267 and 14263".



Figure 3. SAM14268: Black Beaded Short Pants. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.



Figure 4. SAM14394: Cut-Off Beaded Khaki Pants. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

SAM14394 is another pair of 'Xhosa' pants or *ibulukwe* (see Figure 4), from Gobošana (King Williams Town).¹⁰⁰ This pair of trousers, cut-off mid-way and decorated all over with beads and ink writing, and the card notes that it was probably worn by a pre-initiate youth. The cloth and beading is damaged and soiled. There are two further, hand-written insertions on the card; the first fills in the name *No-one* in the allocated space, stating that the pants were 'made by *No-one* Ntuku of the MaMiya clan', and purchased from collector Stephen Long in September 1994. The second hand-written note claims that, 'the tattered and wild style reflects the attitude of youths at this irresponsible stage before initiation – pers. comm. S. Long'. The last pair of pants, or *ibulukwe*, SAM14395 (see Figure 5), is identified as 'Mfengu' from Qunu in the Mount Coke district. Also 'worn by boys', these cream-coloured, manufactured trousers were cut-off at the knee and decorated with fine bands of black appliqué cloth and beads (mainly white and turquoise). The cloth is soiled. They were also purchased from collector Stephen Long in September 1994. The final pair of pants in the ethnographic collection is SAM14484 from Douna, Burkino Faso in West Africa. It was sold in the village market, together with a tunic top (SAM14483) and collected in the field by Lindsay Hooper in February to April 1995. A note reads that 'a cord would be threaded through the waistband and adjusted to size, and the crutch is worn quite low'.



Figure 5. SAM14395: Cream-Coloured Beaded Pants. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

TROUSERS IN THE CULTURAL HISTORY MUSEUM COLLECTION (103)

Identifying the 'Pants' in the Cultural History Museum collections proved a lot more complicated than in the South African Museum. Firstly, there are over twenty-five thousand sartorial items in the cultural history collection. Secondly, the descriptors of 'Pants' or 'Trousers' also changed over time, including terms such as slacks, shorts, culottes and jeans in the categorisations. Thirdly, pants featured separately across each of the sub-categories of womenswear, menswear, girls, boys and infants wear, as well as the sixth category of 'traditional' clothing items, known as TRAD.¹⁰¹ Lastly, and most troubling in my search, was the fact that many of the trousers were not listed as separate items, instead these were classified as part of two- or three-piece suits, or military and other uniforms.

¹⁰⁰ The information provided on the cards informs each of my descriptions. It is not the focus of this study to interrogate the details, for example that the two pairs, SAM14035 and SAM14395, are ascribed to different place names, which relate to the town of King Williamstown.

¹⁰¹ Van Delen noted how certain objects which had entered the collections could not be catalogued in the four Western-oriented categories, and therefore, an additional category was created by van Delen, as a temporary place to 'hold objects' until a better or more appropriate system was developed. Van Delen, personal interview, 22/12/17.

My initial search for 'Pants' across the various categories resulted in a total record of twenty-five pairs. However, in the ongoing unpacking of the collections, the collection assistants, Ntombovuyo Tywakadi and Ayesha Hendricks, alerted me to additional trousers that they found whilst sorting, digitising and re-assigned packing in the Textile Store. I returned to the catalogue cabinet some time later to check for the 'unaccounted' trousers to discover an extra seventy pairs of trousers, as part of suits or uniforms, to add to my record.

The first ten pairs of trousers listed in the catalogue cabinets¹⁰² pre-date the splitting of the Cultural History Museum from the South African Museum in 1965.¹⁰³ One of the first ten pairs of trousers, 7131(SAM9922), has the details of the wearer and occasion. This was a black wool court dress of Jan Hofmeyer from 1885, donated by Mr. de Waal. Three uniforms were donated by Mr. Molke: namely, a three-piece suit in black wool, 7128 (SAM8346), one black court dress with jacket, trousers, bicornes, stockings, cravat, gaiters, braces and waistcoat, 7133 (SAM9431) and a dark, blue velvet uniform, 7135 (SAM9433). No dates, names or further details were provided.¹⁰⁴

There are also four period uniforms that include two tunic and trouser uniforms donated by Mr. Alexander, 7129 (SAM9840) and 7130 (SAM9841), and two redcoats and white breeches, one donated by Mrs. Callee, 7132 (SAM10541) and the other purchased from Professor Taylor, 7136 (SAM10363/4). There is one fancy dress outfit of purple knickerbockers, waistcoat, cape and jacket, identified as 'ex-Koopmans-De-Wet',¹⁰⁵ 7176 (SAM10512). And lastly, bearing an old accession number, OA10974, is an extra large pair of blue trousers from the Secretary of Defence in Pretoria, which moved to the Maritime Museum, Harbour in 1964.06.24 and was returned from the Simonstown Museum on 1986.06.12.

Nine pairs of trousers were accessioned in the period between 1965 and 1969 – the first four years of the existence of the Cultural History Museum.¹⁰⁶ Three of these were 'tailcoat-and-trouser' outfits donated by Miss Spillhaus, 68/61, Miss Fourley, 68/91 and Mr. Pretorius, 69/254 – no further details of wearers or occasion are supplied. Miss Spillhaus also donated one pair of overalls, 'possibly used by a painter dating from 1907', 66/385. There is a men's black mourning suit donated by Mrs. de Witt, 69/33; a page-boy suit, worn by the donor's father at a wedding in 1903 (however no donor name is supplied), 66/500, and a pair of striped trousers donated by Mr. Pretorius, 69/255. Lastly, Honourable de Villiers donated a dark green coachman's uniform, 68/389 and Mr. Roth donated two Royal Hussar's uniforms – a cream jacket and pants, and a green jacket with fawn pants, 65/981.

The 1970s saw a widening of the scope of accessioning with the first women's trousers entering the collection. Of the twenty-five pairs of pants accessioned in this decade, six were women's (four of which were purchased); four were boys' (three of which were purchased); the first pair of men's shorts entered the collection; and, two international, 'folk dress' items were acquired. The first pair of women's pants, 71/139 was a navy blue, 'see through' pair of lace slacks, which were purchased for sixty cents on the Parade 21.7.1970. The second two women's purchases, also bought at the Parade (together with accession numbers 761–790¹⁰⁷ for R9,00) were two catsuits – one striped lurex catsuit designed by Simon Jeffrey (England), 72/774, and the second, a floor-length black and white linen catsuit, 72/786. The last womenswear purchase was a pair of printed knit, hot pants circa 1973/74 from the Animal Anti Cruelty Shop, 75/478. Mrs. Durrell donated two pairs of Apres Ski

102 I initially worked with the catalogue cabinet in the Textile Store, which ordered the objects by type across the various categories. Later, I would also refer to the catalogue in the Collections Manager's offices, which ordered the objects numerically 1- 8000, and after 1965, ordered the objects by their accession dates.

103 The catalogue cards note the original relationship to the South African Museum with accession numbers (SAM) in the Transfer Register reflecting those objects that were assigned to be moved from the South African Museum to the newly created Cultural History Museum, with its focus on white-owned and/or Eurocentric artefacts. I discuss this process in detail in Chapter One.

104 I do not offer dates or historical references in these descriptions, unless they are recorded in the registers or accession cards.

105 I discuss the relationship between the Koopmans-de Wet Museum and the Cultural History Museum in detail in Chapter One.

106 That only nine pairs were acquired, shows that the interest of the museum and the donors' focus was largely on womenswear, and specifically, relating to costume, dresses and accessories, which saw a much larger proportion of the collection's development at this time, namely almost three thousand items. Trousers were not deemed highly collectable or very important to the collection.

107 A set of late Sixties 'high fashion' items were purchased on the Parade, Cape Town, which included mini dresses, cocktail dresses, evening dresses, skirts, jackets, catsuits and capes.

'stoffis' that she had worn in Davos in 1950, one turquoise faille, 78/105 and the other patou blue, 78/106.

A pair of printed paisley boy's nylon, hot pants, 72/770 and a blue and white patterned pair of boy's bermudas, 72/771 were also purchased on the Parade, for a total of R9,00 in 1972. One cotton boy's sailor suit was purchased in 1979 from Grafin Bolza, 79/259. Mr. Zekowski donated a boy's white costume, 70/54. Mrs. E. M. Engelbrecht donated a pair of cotton twill men's shorts, 77/139, Mrs. Carter donated a pair of dark ecru wool, knee-length trousers, 77/559 and Mrs. Boehmke donated a pair of khaki riding pants, 72/704. The 1970s also saw the introduction of a new category, named 'traditional' or TRAD. An Argentinean school board donated a pair of wool, khaki trousers, 76/134 TRAD and the museum purchased, for R100,00 a pair of black wool, Bavarian shorts with white and green embroidery from Grafin Bolza, 79/250 TRAD.

There were also two 'costumes' accessioned in the 1970s: one late eighteenth-century fancy dress, knee-length trousers, waistcoat, frock coat, stockings, hat and wig donated by Mr. Zekowski, 70/55, and a pair of men's charcoal striped trousers, made for and worn by the donor, Dr Bruwer at the Voortrekker Festival in 1938, 71/148. There were also two wedding suits donated to the museum in the 1970s: one soiled, moth-eaten suit belonging to donor Mr. Kotze, 79/ 206; and the other, 72/68, a midnight blue three-piece suit worn by Albany Kennedy in 1969, donated by Mr. van Wyk. The museum director at the time, Dr Schneewind, donated an afternoon tea suit, 73/420. Three more uniforms entered the collection – an artillery uniform, 73/8; a uniform of a German nobleman, 73/109; and the dress uniform worn by South African-born, governor General van Zyl, 74/103. Mrs. Coetzee donated four suits, 75/191 and 75/196–198, worn by the late ex-minister Blaar Coetzee to openings of parliament, as ambassador, or for dinner around 1969.

The most notable change in the 1980s was the number of donations made of outfits worn by the donors' fathers (thirteen of the twenty-eight items), from the exotic to the mundane. Mr. McElhinny donated his father's black wool dress uniform, 82/24 dating to 'before 1886', with a note that claims 'the family have a photograph



Figure 6. SACHM82/406: Khaki Work Pants. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.



Figure 7. SACHM96/441: Khaki Safari Shorts. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries



Figure 8. SACHM88/316: Boer War Cutoffs. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

of him wearing the suit'; an English-made tailcoat, knee-length trousers in cream woollen cloth, plus white shirts, silk stockings, tailcoat and matching trousers worn in India, 82/25; a midnight blue wool dress uniform, 82/26; and, a pair of riding breeches, 82/30. Museum curator at the Africana Museum at the time, Lelong Immelman, donated a range of outfits worn by her father, the late Rene Immelman, chief librarian of the Jagger Library at the University of Cape Town (1930–1970), that included a tweed jacket and a pair of well-worn, khaki wool/polyester blend trousers, 82/406 (see Figure 6); a light green colour polyester, short sleeved jacket and shorts safari suit, 82/407 (see Figure 7); a pair of dark maroon polyester swimming trunks, 82/409; white jogging pants with red and navy trimming, 82/410; and a pair of “greenish colour” underpants, 82/413¹⁰⁸. Mrs. Plant donated a suit worn by her father, Dr de Villiers-Hart, at the ceremony of his knighthood by the Sultan of

¹⁰⁸ SACHM82/406–417. Lelong Immelman donated a representative, eleven-piece wardrobe of a working, middle class white South African: with items such as the iconic safari suit, wash and wear trousers, waistcoat, shirt, underpants, socks, neck scarves and ties.



Figure 9. SACHM94/143: Beaded Repurposed Pants. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

Brunei, 85/91. In addition, a navy blue 1940s wool suit that belonged to donor Mr. Smith's father, 87/604; a black 1940s men's dress suit worn by donor Mrs. Goodkind's father, 87/139; and a pair of cotton khaki shorts worn during the Boer War as trousers by donor Mrs. Brown's father-in-law William Brown, which his son later cut and wore as shorts, 88/316 (see Figure 8), were also accessioned.

Eleven more uniforms entered the collection in the 1980s, with two South African Defense Force officer uniforms from the Castle Museum donated by Mr. Humphries, 86/608 (old Castle number 4406/7), and 86/609 (old Castle number 4408/9). Two Seafarer's Club uniforms, one donated by Mrs. Katz, 86/612 (old Castle number 1148), and one double-breasted jacket and trousers, tailored by Hepworth's (a Hardy Amies design), worn by Mr. Klass, 87/81 were accessioned, as well as a Port Captain's uniform, made in South Africa donated by Mr. Paya, 88/31 and a naval uniform, 86/695. Mrs. Inglis donated an English colonial service officer's tropical uniform used in Nigeria and Basutoland, consisting of a white cotton jacket and matching trousers, 81/75. Professor Taylor donated three uniforms of his Excellency, Sir Herbert Stanley, 82/327, 82/328 and 82/329, and one black wool dinner jacket and matching trousers, 82/336.

The 1980s saw two more boy's shorts enter the collection, one khaki pair donated by Mrs. Stell, 81/200, and a boy's summer suit with cotton lined, dark blue shorts, 86/696, purchased at Bits Of Fun for R10,00. Only two pairs of women's trousers were accessioned, the first a pair of woollen slacks with houndstooth pattern, especially made for the owner, 89/526; and the second (classified as 'traditional') belonged to Mrs. Webb's mother, an early twentieth-century pair of red bunting Chinese trousers with a blue cotton waistband, 88/597 TRAD.

Although the collection development followed a similar pattern in the 1990s as the previous decade, there was one radical change. In addition to the twenty-seven pairs of trousers of, belonging to, or referencing white South Africans, the first two pairs of trousers of black South Africans were accessioned into the Cultural History Museum and classified as 'traditional' in 1994.¹⁰⁹ The museum purchased for R48,00 each, two pairs of beaded trousers (*ibulukwe*) from beadwork collector Stephen Long; the first was a pair of 'Fengu' boy's black shorts with decorative white beadwork (*my comment* – these were formal, lined trousers that had been repurposed as shorts), 94/143 TRAD (see Figure 9); and the second was a pair of green melton, 'Xhosa' boy's

¹⁰⁹ Van Delen received "an instruction from Mr Roux at the time, with Stephen Long's contact details." Van Delen, personal interview, 22/12/17.



Figure 10. SACHM94/151: Beaded Melton Shorts. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

shorts trimmed with bands of brown stitching and beadwork, 94/151 TRAD (see Figure 10).¹¹⁰

Also accessioned, as ‘traditional,’ was part of a men’s Voortrekker folk dress, a pair of grey striped trousers donated by Mr. Veldman, 92/362 TRAD. The boundaries of the category ‘traditional’ seemed unclear. A short black jacket, cotton waistcoat and striped flap-front trouser suit, also used during the centenary celebrations, was donated by Miss Tucker, 93/473, and a few years later, a moleskin brown, young boy’s suit consisting of a jacket and flap-front trousers, worn at the laying of the cornerstone of the Voortrekker Monument in 1938, was donated by Professor Kritzing, 97/233; yet, neither of these were classified ‘traditional’.

Four more uniforms entered the collection: a South African Navy, Rear Admiral’s mess uniform, donated by Mrs. Johnson, 93/937; a fireman’s uniform, made of wool and presented by Cape Town Fire and Rescue, 95/296; an off-white pair of silk riding breeches, worn by donor Mrs. van Zyl’s uncle, the German Mr. Malzer in WWII, 96/502; and, an engineer’s uniform, dating from 1940–45 WWII, donated by Mr. Alan Nathan, 97/56. A further six men’s trouser outfits were accessioned, namely a wedding suit of donor Mrs. Johnston’s father worn in 1919 consisting of a black wool tailcoat, striped trousers, waistcoat and top hat, 96/49; a Woolfsons suit made for donor David Morrell, 98/68; a Joe Soap men’s orbit baggy shorts purchased for R99,00 from the Space Station, 99/44; and lastly, a pair of men’s swimming trunks, 96/440 and two poly-cotton green safari suits, 96/441 and 96/446, all donated by Mrs. Spooner.

Mrs. Spooner also donated a number of women’s trousers, including a navy blue striped, trouser suit from the 1940s by Rex Trueform, 96/381; a mid-1960s patterned trouser suit, 96/391; a pair of navy Rex Trueform women’s slacks, dating from the late 1940s, 96/399 (see Figure 11); and, a pair of light blue shorts from the 1950s, 96/401, all of which were worn by the donor’s mother.¹¹¹ In addition, Mrs. Spooner donated from her own wardrobe, a white, blue and red pique summer slack suit with bell-bottomed trousers from the 1970s, made by Riviera, 96/392; and a blue polyester pair of wide-legged women’s trousers made by Barringtons, 96/400.¹¹² The textile curator at the time, van Delen donated a pair of Woolworths jeans dating from the

110 In 1994, the Cultural History Museum purchased about one hundred beaded items from the Eastern Cape in three tranches, all from Long, with the first, a small series of nine items (SACHM94/65 – 94/73), the second which included these trousers, of sixteen items (SACHM94/140 – 94/156), and the last, almost eighty pieces (SACHM94/518 – 94/694), which included four re-purposed ‘Xhosa’ jackets (SACHM94/685–688).

111 Mrs Spooner donated almost 250 objects to the museum in 1996, a further 100 items in 1997, and a final fifteen pieces in 1998, which include much homeware, a large selection of her mother’s dresses, her own fashion items, some clothes of her father, and some toys, postcards, puzzles and dressmaking artefacts. See SACHM Donations File: 1995–1999.

112 Museum correspondence from the textile curator van Delen, thanks Mrs Spooner for the generous donation from “your mother’s house, and for ransacking your own wardrobe for the museum”, Donations File: 1995–1999, letter dated 15 July 1996.



Figure 11. SACHM96/399: Navy Blue Slacks. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

1980s, 99/279, and the museum purchased a pair of women's denim Capri pants with white stitching detail for R230,00 from the Young Designer Emporium, 99/39. Lastly, four boys pants were accessioned. Mrs. Spooner donated a white, never worn, 1960s boy's safari suit, 96/446; Ms Coetzee donated a 1940s sailor suit jacket and matching trousers, 98/184 and a 1940s jacket and trouser suit, 98/185, both worn by her father to St George's Cathedral; and an ivory satin, page-boy suit, worn by donor Mrs. de Villiers's uncle, Mr. van Rensburg, at wedding in 1910 was donated, 94/75.

By 1999, when the Cultural History Museum collections merged with the other museums, there were sixteen women's trousers, twelve boy's trousers and seventy-eight trousers, a total of one-hundred-and-three pairs of pants. As a brief comparison, a survey of the trousers in the collection at Museum Africa show a somewhat different demographic, with ninety-two pairs of women's pants, two boy's trousers and only forty-eight pairs of men's trousers.

TROUSERS IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY COLLECTION (0)

Although the National Gallery was founded in the late 1800s, it would take one hundred years before objects of material culture – items worn on the body, used by the body, or surrounding the body – were acquired by the institution for its African Art collection. The African Art collection includes “South African expressive styles, in media such as beadwork, sculpture, metalwork, weaving, carving in wood, bone and horn, and exquisitely crafted adornment, regalia, ritual or personal items”. The collection is predominantly focused on beadwork, with a much smaller textile-based, sartorial collection. There are no trousers in the collection, neither plain nor embellished. This gap reflects the institution's selection criteria: what was collected in terms of *dress/fashion* and adornment artefacts, shows a predilection for objects deemed ‘authentic’ yet ‘unique’, in other words objects considered in some way original, yet retaining a ‘traditional’ authenticity.¹¹³ This for example, is evident

¹¹³ Martin, personal interview, 01/09/17.

in the types of menswear objects that did make it into the collection, which includes three 'Zulu' *beshu* or skin aprons, 91/211, 91/216 and 91/218; one man's blanket 94/31:1; and a 'Xhosa' man's cape, 90/68W:2. In contrast, the Wits Art Museum acquired a pair of traditional *mblaselo* trousers in 2013.¹¹⁴

TROUSERS IN THE IZIKO COLLECTION SINCE THE MERGER (20)

Since the merger of the eleven previously segregated museums and their collections – which includes the three above-mentioned collections – into Iziko Museums in 1999, the collections have been combined (in policy, if not yet fully in practice), and named the Iziko Social History Collection. Five separate sets of sartorial objects entered the Iziko Museums in the last two decades, that each contained trousers of sorts, namely 'Oriental' clothing; a series of West African outfits; a number of carnival costumes; a large donation of iconic, printed and patterned *isishweshwe* garments; and a presentation of South African designer garments.

The first seven trouser items joined the Iziko Museums Social History Collection as a result of the merger. This included a woman's white cotton, wedding outfit consisting of a voluminous head to mid-calf top, embroidered over the face, and a bottom, 'which is like trousers with the feet on', as well as six pairs of men's trousers in the 'Chinese' collection of the Bo Kaap Museum.¹¹⁵ The rest of the trousers that were acquired since the merger addressed some of the perceptible gaps across the collections. A number of two-piece outfits made of classic Malian printed 'veritable wax' or embroidered cotton 'bazain' were purchased on a fieldtrip to Mali in 2007. Seven of these items consist of large men's tunics, or *boubous* and drawstring pants; two of which showed signs of wear, SH2007/41 and SH2007/44, and the balance were new and never worn, SH2007/43 and SH2008/115 – SH2008/118. The third series of items to enter the collection were Cape Carnival costumes, reflecting the first purchases by the museum of Cape Town's Coloured communities' sartorial



Figure 12. SH2010/19: White Satin Pants. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

¹¹⁴ Wits Art Museum, storeroom visit, 06/10/15.

¹¹⁵ Van Delen, email correspondence, 17/12/17.

culture, prompted by the exhibition *Ghoema and Glitter: New Year Carnival in Cape Town* first held at the Castle in 2010, and later at the Slave Lodge Museum in 2014. Two pants outfits were accessioned consisting of a jacket, pants, umbrella and hat, both in white satin with blue and yellow inserts down the sides – one adult ensemble, SH2010/19 (see Figure 12), and one young boy's outfit, SH2010/20.

The large donation of one hundred and thirty-six items by collector Dr Juliette Leeb-du Toit in 2012¹¹⁶ was also prompted by an exhibition. *IsiShweshwe: Material Women?* (2013 ongoing), was co-curated by Leeb-du Toit and members of the Iziko Museums curatorial and conservation teams. Three pairs of pants were included in this donation – two brown and white patchwork 'shweshwe, three-quarter length, elasticised pants with blue and white cuffs possibly made by a Malawian maker, SH2012/152 and SH2012/153; and one brown and white 'shweshwe' narrow leg, men's shorts by South African designer, Amanda Laird Cherry, purchased at Highway Hospice Market in Hillcrest, SH2012/197 (see Figure 13). The final pair of trousers to enter the Iziko Museums collection takes the form of a green, stretchy sequinned catsuit by South African designer, Chris Levin circa 1992, SH2013/27a (see Figure 14), as part of a presentation of eight fashion items by then-art curator, Mark Coetzee, purchased for Iziko Museums at a Strauss and Co Auction in 2013.¹¹⁷



Figure 13. SH2012/197: Amanda Laird Cherry Shweshwe Men's Shorts. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

TROUSER-LED REFLECTIONS

All nine pairs of trousers in the South African Museum's ethnographic collection are menswear. There are three unembellished pairs of leather or skin pants and two plain pairs of cotton trousers, one from Mali and one from Burkina Faso. The remaining four pairs of trousers are all embellished. These were all purchased from beadwork collector, Long between 1991 and 1994. Although this reflects the absence of the wearing of trousers in precolonial, South African sartorial practices, it clearly does not represent the wearing of trousers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by black South Africans. Specific collecting practices framed particular representations of *dress/fashion* that would deny or disavow the idea that black South Africans wore Western-style trousers just like white South Africans did – whose trousers would end up in museum collections.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Considered a 'significant presentation', Leeb-du Toit donated a large part of her private collection to Iziko Social History Collections with the first phase of 107 items that included clothing, accessories, quilts, Da Gama textile swatches and couture garments, and a second tranche of 29 items (Iziko Annual Report 2012/2013: 143–144).

¹¹⁷ SH2013/27b is an accompanying designer sketch with fabric swatch. Lot 49, paid R2108,00.

¹¹⁸ I discuss one pair of Western-style trousers that did however remain on the *Ethnogallery* exhibit for almost forty years in chapter three.



Figure 14: SH2013/27a: Chris Levin Sequin Catsuit. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

A second key feature of the South African Museum record is the complete lack of information of individual wearers (by name), instead only generic references to youths, boys, or modes of wearing are recorded.

Five significant features are worth noting in this brief summary of the records of the trousers found in the Cultural History Museum collection. Firstly, compared to the ethnographic collection, built upon considered curatorial choices of what entered the collection through purchases and museum-led expeditions, the Cultural History Museum collection was almost exclusively developed through the benefaction of donors; below ten percent of the trousers in the collection were acquired by the museum through active purchasing. A collection developed largely in this way reflects the donors' perceptions, tastes and notions of collective memory – in this case, an almost exclusively white, middle class South African identity. The eleven purchases made by the museum include five pairs of women's trousers, four pairs of boy's trousers and two pairs of 'traditional' trousers. As considered choices, they indicate curatorial intervention into the perceived gaps in the collection.

The second important feature of these records would be the identification of the wearer and very often the occasion of wearing. Half of all the pants on record have details entered on the accession cards of the wearer by name, and of the places, dates or occasions of wearing; a stark contrast to the ethnographic collections where details supplied, if any, would be generic. In the case of the new and un-worn purchased items in this collection, the intended wearer is inferred as white, middle class fashionable women, men and youths, following the collective identity of the collection.

The third feature speaks to the deeply entrenched, colonial character of the collection, with almost half this record relating directly to the British Empire, Dutch colonial heritage, and white South African, largely Afrikaner histories, such as the Voortrekker festivities, Boer War memorabilia or the dress of local ministers and the military. The fourth feature of this collection is the very minimal presence of working class clothing, workwear or

overalls, and the complete absence of men's jeans from the collection.

A final feature worth noting of this collection is the way in which it points to the museum's decision to purchase items of 'indigenous' fashion at the moment of the first democratic elections in 1994. This trend continued after the Iziko Museums merger in 1999 in its effort to address the collection's gaps, and in particular the omission of clothes worn by non-white South Africans.

The absence of trousers in the National Gallery collection illuminates a secondary selection criterion, even within the widely reframed and revised acquisition policies set out by the institution since the early 1990s. As an archive of discerning, creative and aesthetic values, certain bodies, cultural practices, subjects and objects were still denied entry into the collection. In this case, objects and practices that reflected hybridities were largely rejected in favour of more purely 'traditional' artefacts.

The five series of sartorial artefacts, accessioned since the merger, however represent Iziko Museum's decision to diversify its collections. Three of these accessions coincided with exhibitions. Expanding the collection to include *dress/fashion* from further afield in Africa, as well as welcoming local costumes, celebrating designers, and recognising fashion practices across cultural diversities aligns with the newly-framed collection objectives of Iziko Museums' that,

... not only looking at the inequities within our collections and the way that they are presented, but also addressing glaring contradictions in modes and paradigms of collecting that are made even more offensive in light of our new Constitution (Rassool, 2013:8).

CHAPTER ONE:

WHEN THE SARTORIAL ENTERS THE MUSEUM

Particularly striking was the place of dress in [the civilizing mission]: clothes were at once commodities and accoutrements of a civilized self. They were to prove a privileged means for constructing new forms of value, personhood, and history on the colonial frontier (Comaroff, 1997:400).

The disparate collections of trousers listed in the records above, reflect the wide-ranging ideological and political forces, social conditions, museal practices, and interpersonal relations that shaped the museums, as well as the individuals and the disciplines governing the collections in this study.¹¹⁹ Susan Pearce argues that collecting “is a set of things people do; an aspect of individual and social practice ... as a means [to] relate to the material world” (1995:4). The sartorial objects in these museum collections all entered the museums as a result of various decisions, and in this chapter I consider some of the major influences on these impulses – what happened when sartorial objects were identified as collectable; why this was so; which objects were desired across which disciplines; how these concepts evolved over time; and how selection was socially, ideologically and politically motivated. A key concern of this thesis is the identity politics of the sartorial objects as representing the original owners or wearers. I am interested in the way in which particular conditions were manifested both inside and outside of the museums for the collection of specific objects that would frame primarily race, but also classed and gendered identities.

To read the sartorial history of South Africans *as presented* by museums, one is led to falsely believe that black South Africans only contributed to the construction of ‘traditional’ cultural dress practices, outside of the realm of fashion and modernity, while white South Africans participated in broader circulations of western fashion, history and modernity, with museum collections bearing witness to these skewed ‘truths’. As “dress lies at the margins of the body and marks the boundary between self and other, individual and society” (Entwistle, 2000:327), a study of the sartorial objects in South African museums points to not only who is represented in these collections, but also how certain boundaries between people such as race, class, and gender were constructed, and often still are perpetuated via their representation in museums.

French fashion curator Olivier Saillard suggests that clothing museums are museums of missing bodies – ‘*un musée de vêtements, c’est un musée des corps disparus*’ (2017). In the processes of museumification, the object is split from both the physical body and social context of the original owner or wearer, and frequently, with this loss of body and context, is a further range of losses in terms of knowing the complex story of the wearing of the object – such as the attitude or intention of wearing, or the occasion or function of wearing the artefact. It is only in cases where clothing in a museum is associated with a celebrated individual such as Miriam Makeba, Jackie Kennedy, or Nelson Mandela, whose memories remains vivid in public imagination, that an object is easily ‘re-imagined’ by the viewer via the recall of images or film footage or repertoires of being of the original wearers.

However, a second notion of the ‘missing body’ is relevant to this study – the total loss of the names of the wearers of objects found in the fine arts and ethnographic collections. In this case, the identities of both ordinary and exceptional black South Africans. In the case of the white wearers of the sartorial objects – largely held in the cultural history collections, at least half of them are remembered by name in the accession records. This racially biased, museal practice of ‘remembering’ and ‘forgetting’ underpins the colonial and apartheid

¹¹⁹ Similar patterns would show in other South African museums and museums of the British Empire, with shared issues of class, race and power, and struggles over historical narratives (Mackenzie, 2009).

nature of the collecting, and the complicity of museums in the specific role of shaping history and memory as a means to promote chosen, if not skewed, ideas about nation, identity and heritage.

Museal practices impact deeply on the objects in their collections. These influences are complicated in this study, by the three museums' divergent ideological dispositions and political impulses, with the result that dramatically different notions of what South African sartorial histories are, is reflected via the collections, compounded by uneven representations of makers, owners or wearers of the objects in the collections. In order to understand the ways in which these objects entered the museums, and how the museal dispositions towards collecting *dress/fashion* changed over time, across the three museums, I explored the specific histories of the three collections that related directly to the development of the sartorial in their collections. I focus on key developments that influenced the composition of each collection, but I recognise that developments beyond the sartorial field, both in the museums and outside, may too, have been persuasive.

I begin with an exploration of the colonial origins and early developments of the nineteenth century collection of material culture at the South African Museum that included objects of *dress/fashion*. However, noticeable shifts in South African politics by the mid-twentieth century would affect this museum and its collections, as apartheid-led ideologies forged the 'splitting' of a new, independent museum, the Cultural History from the South African Museum in 1965. The National Gallery, also reacting to shifting South African socio-politics, primarily countered the prevailing hegemony of white political power through, firstly challenging the exclusive, Eurocentric definition of 'fine arts', and secondly by arguing for the inclusion of African 'expressive' cultures, such as beadwork and decorative objects. The socio-political changes external to the museums would continue to inform not only the different approaches to, and practices of, collecting, but would also impact the shaping of collective and individual memories, national identities, and cultural epistemologies over time, that defined the representation of South African sartorial histories in museums.

THE MAKING OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM COLLECTION

The origins of the South African Museum began with the Dutch governor Adriaan Simon Van der Stel in the early eighteenth century in the Company Gardens as an appendage to his Menagerie and Collection of Live Animals and open to visitors.¹²⁰ By 1825, at the behest of Lord Charles Somerset, an official statement appeared in the *Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser* stating that:

...an Establishment [needs] to be formed in Cape Town under the title of 'The South African Museum' for the reception and classification of the various objects of the Animal, Vegetable and Mineral Kingdoms which are found in South Africa, whereby an opportunity will be opened to the colonists of becoming acquainted with the general and local resources of the Colony (Summers, 1975:5).

Dr Andrew Smith, a medical doctor with keen interests in investigating and documenting 'as much as possible' was appointed superintendent of the new museum in the same year, 1825.¹²¹ The notion of promoting the colonies via the representation of indigenous peoples and their material cultures, in combination with natural history was an integral function in the development of colonial museums throughout the British Empire, or as Mackenzie puts it, it was "part of the process of ordering the world" (2009:7–8).

Smith's interest in ethnography continued throughout his association with the South African Museum

¹²⁰ The British occupation in 1806 forced Van der Stel's display to close. There are no descriptions of specific artefacts owned by van der Stel on display or in the collection, or whether these objects were received as gifts, collected for permanent storage and conservation, or served in the governor's private interest as a 'collection of curiosities'.

¹²¹ Smith had already been active in the Eastern Cape collecting "Xhosa ethnographic material, and ... voluminous notes" before his appointment to the museum and may have been instrumental in promoting the museum's establishment (Summers, 1975:8).

(1825–1837) and saw him partake in ongoing expeditions “in the colony and beyond, traveling extensively, hunting, and collecting both information about indigenous peoples and materials for the museum” (Mackenzie, 2009:81–82). In 1826, Smith compiled a detailed list of the objects in the museum’s possession, then known as the ‘Government Collection’ – the collection included some of Smith’s and taxidermist Jules Verreaux’s private collections, as loans (Summers 1975, 2009:15). The list included ‘ethnographic material ... [namely] items made by Colonial tribes’ in a category titled, Works of Art (Summers, 1975:14).¹²² Although Smith’s earlier collecting practices are well known,¹²³ it is difficult to ascertain the scope of material culture that he did collect, and whether articles of clothing collected by Smith were in fact included in the early collections of the South African Museum (Dell, 1994:253).

A photograph, with the caption “Bone ornament of the Bamangwato, thought to have been collected by Andrew Smith, 1835”, appears in Summers’ publication *A History of The South African Museum* (1975:14).¹²⁴ In keeping with the practices of collectors at the time however, Smith lent his private collection to the museum throughout his tenure, and eventually took with him “his own collections as well as materials gathered in his 1834–1836 expedition [to Kuruman] when he left the Cape to return to London in 1837” (Mackenzie, 2009:83). The ‘bone ornament’ in Summers’ publication of 1975, however suggests that, if indeed Smith collected it in 1835, it may have remained in the museum’s collection to date. Anthropology curator, Gerald Klinghardt, confirmed that this item is accessioned in the museum, “yet it is registered as having ‘no history’ so the association with Andrew Smith is uncertain”.¹²⁵

The inclusion of ethnographic material culture in the South African Museum collections persisted, and by the 1860s, then museum director, Edgar Leopold Layard (1855–1875) created a “cabinet display for public benefit” at the South African National Library, where the museum was temporarily housed (Mackenzie, 2009:79).¹²⁶ Appeals were made to the public for donations of natural specimens and financial assistance, as well as “specimens of Native art and manufacture” (Government Notice, 20 August 1855, No.153 in Mackenzie, 2009:84).

Layard’s display at the National Library included “a mixed assortment of birds’ eggs, Egyptian and Greek relics, casts of celebrated men,” and an embroidered Greek jacket worn by the British poet, Lord Byron, which had been preserved by his servant (Summers, 1975:14). As the interest in material culture lay in objects of exotic origin, there was no exigency in collecting British sartorial objects at the time by the museum, and Byron’s other, less exotic jackets would not have made the selection.

COLLECTING CULTURES

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw the South African Museum intensify its efforts to become “the leading scientific institution in the country,” led by William Lutley Sclater as museum director (1896–1906) and Louis Albert Peringuey as the assistant director (Summers, 1975:67). In the decade following the move to, and opening of the South African Museum in the purpose-built, building¹²⁷ in the Company Gardens in 1896, “nearly every aspect of the modern museum received the form in which it exists today”, writes Summers in 1975 (ibid.). Within the first two years of his appointment, Sclater had been able to,

122 Other categories included minerals, conchology, insects, turtles, lizards, snakes and quadrupeds.

123 Andrew Lye’s (1975) *Andrew Smith’s Travel Diaries*, and Percival R. Kirby’s (1939) *The Diary of Andrew Smith*. Dell describes Smith as “documenting all the cultures which he discovered” (1994:253).

124 The photograph is also used in William Lye’s publication on Smith of the same year and was photographed by the museum’s photographer for the two publications.

125 SAM-AE5108. “Its origin is given as Bamangwato, but Miss Shaw told me she had her doubts about this, and I would be inclined to agree with her.” Gerald Klinghardt, email correspondence, 16/03/16.

126 The focus on collecting objects of ‘scientific’ interest was concurrent with museum developments in southern Africa at the time. The Albany Museum in Grahamstown was founded 1855, the Port Elizabeth Museum followed in 1857; and museums were established in Bloemfontein, 1877; Kingwilliamstown, 1884; Durban, 1887; Transvaal, 1892, and Kimberley, 1902 (Mackenzie, 2009:79).

127 With few changes until recently, the building is still home to the South African Museum.

... fill the new house with fresh displays, put the library in good order, set up a proper registration system, build firmly the departmental organisation, set up a framework for collecting and research, and above all, make the Museum known throughout the scientific world through the periodical publication, the *Annals of the South Africa Museum* (Summers 1975:67).

The South African Museum's acquisitions followed international collection practices, with a focus primarily on the collection of weapons, domestic items, objects of adornment, as well as the often illegal and inhumane practice of acquiring skulls and skeletons (for 'scientific' research purposes¹²⁸) that relied on "grave looting and body trade" (Mackenzie, 2009:94). The voracious hunger for collecting was "propelled by considerable rivalry and a degree of chauvinism" present in museums worldwide at the turn of the century, notes Mackenzie (2009:94). The "commercialisation and commodification of the art, artefacts and human remains of indigenous peoples" reflected the extreme imbalance in power relations among the peoples of the world, and the excessive 'criminality' of colonial museum practices (Mackenzie, 2009:9).

Objects of adornment were more modestly collected by the South African Museum, compared to its more active collection of weapons and human remains. Necklaces, beadwork, skin skirts, hats and caps, armbands, aprons and anklets were acquired by the museum throughout the early twentieth century, yet they accounted for only around ten percent of the seven thousand objects in the collection by the 1950s. Sartorial items that entered the collection at the turn of the century included a 'Bushman' tooth necklace¹²⁹ purchased from John Noble in 1898; a Damara women's headdress¹³⁰ presented by J.C. Watermeyer in 1900; about fifteen pieces of 'Xhosa/Zulu' beadwork¹³¹ presented by the Commissioner of Public Works in 1902; and, pair of grass sandals¹³² purchased from Reverend Christol in 1904.

Museum director, Sclater initiated the registering all the objects in the museum in 1896, a colossal task that he undertook with other professionals, assistants and volunteers (Summers, 1975:75). Separate registers were opened for each class of objects that the museum had collected: *Vertebrates*, *Invertebrates*, *Minerals*, *Fossils* and *Antiquities*. The first entry in the *Antiquities Register* dates from 1899. The objects were entered without regard for their original acquisition dates, and numbered consecutively. These large, red leather-bound registers remained in use until 1956.

Different headings were provided for the 'types' of objects that were being accessioned at the top of each page. These headings changed throughout the fifty-year period, with distinctions in the late nineteenth century made between objects of European origin as *Colonial Antiquities*, artefacts from Asia and Indonesia as *Exotic Anthropology*, and indigenous items as *Exotic Antiquities*. Many of these distinctions remained in place but were renamed by the end of the first decade, as *Foreign Curios & Antiquities* relating to objects of both European and Eastern origins, including Cape vernacular items, while all objects of indigenous, southern African origin were registered under *Native Curios*. Other categories in the register, included *Skulls*; *Adze*; *Amulets*; *Arrows*; *Weapons and Implements*; *Stone Implements*; *Coins and Medals*; *Skulls and Skeletons*; *Stone and Bone Implements*; and *Casts of Natives*.

Sartorial objects were variably accessioned under the headings *Colonial Antiquities*, *Exotic Antiquities*, and *Native Curios*. These categories set up the frameworks for the collecting and reception of objects by the museum with their ascribed parameters of taste, value and racial divisions. The distance formed between 'antiquities' and 'curios' for registering objects of dress and adornment highlighted the concept of the European as historical and the indigenous as cultural. By situating ethnographic objects within a framework of

128 In 1869, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies called for "information with regards to the peculiarities of the various Races within British Possessions" (Bank, 2006:106).

129 SAM52.

130 SAM70.

131 SAM274–287. The records describe these as 'Xhosa/Zulu'.

132 SAM465.

curiosity, these objects were denied history. As Mackenzie points out, that ethnographic objects in museums are collected contemporaneously, they often reflect an artificial temporality, “collected in order to reflect social and technological atavisms” (Mackenzie, 2009:4). Mackenzie continues,

... the act of collecting such emblematic artefacts demonstrated the alleged distance of the societies that produced them from the progress symbolized by the imperial modernism of the museum in which they were displayed (2009:4).

Under Perinquey's directorship (following Sclater's resignation in 1906), the Anthropology Department received three new exhibition cases, which “allowed for a complete rearrangement of the anthropological display on more systematic and scientific lines” (Dell, 1994:220). The exhibition was arranged so that,

... native basket-ware, pottery, dresses, necklaces, and trinkets, musical instruments, implements of domestic use, pipes and snuff-boxes, iron tools, stone implements, etc. etc., are now grouped together, and the walls are utilised for the display of aboriginal stone engravings, as well as for series of photographs of our native races, copies of Bushman paintings, etc. (SAM Report 1906:33 cited in Dell, 1994:220).

There is no record of the specific ‘dresses’ on the display. Perinquey may have requested assistance from other South African museums, as well as drawn objects from the museum's own collection, which by 1906 had about sixty pieces of beadwork, as well as feather headdresses, skin skirts, a petticoat, straw hat, apron, cloth satchel, and pair of grass sandals. Further acquisitions between 1907 and 1909 included an Abakweta dress¹³³ presented by the Albany Museum in 1907; a Damara woman's headdress¹³⁴ presented by the McGregor Museum; and approximately forty items of adornment¹³⁵ presented by H.J. Edney from Herschel in 1907. This focus on African material culture, in a South African museum as colonial institution at the turn of the century, argues Elizabeth Dell, presented a systematic and scientific arrangement of what was deemed ‘un-modern’ and rapidly disappearing (1994:220).

The focus on collecting and circulating objects, images and narratives that marked black South African life as ‘traditional’ and ‘tribal’ was sustained and disseminated, via the displays of material culture collections in museums. Mackenzie argues that the colonial museum, as the emblem of a singular Western modernity, became the mechanism of epistemological violence through which non-Western, indigenous cultures were viewed, assessed and collected across multiple colonial sites that included India, Canada and South Africa (2009:5). The far-reaching impact of these practices has meant that a particularly, skewed and limited version of ‘black South African life’ was constructed, and the legacies thereof, sustained throughout much of the twentieth century.

THE BLACK VICTORIANS

It is through contemporary archival work that a reclamation of some of the silenced and disremembered histories is possible. In stark contrast to the singular representation of black South Africans, as ‘tribal’ and thus ‘unmodern’, at the turn of the twentieth century, South African photographer, Santu Mofokeng's project *The Black Photo Album/Look At Me: 1890–1950* (1997) presented another story altogether of the lives and identities of late Victorian, black urban working- and middle-class families in South Africa. Mofokeng collected private photographs reflecting the aspirations and self-image of black South Africans “wearing Western fashions in self-commissioned photographs that provide a tangible evidence of black modernity” in the first half of the twentieth century (Dodd, 2015:156). In *The Black Photo Album*, many of the subjects were property

¹³³ SAM665

¹³⁴ SAM1183

¹³⁵ This included beaded necklets, arm and leg bands, waist belts and headpieces.

owners who had acquired a Christian mission education¹³⁶ and lived a life in manner and dress very similar to those of European settlers.

Victoria Collis argues that, “black people ‘dreaming of freedom’ ... grappled for, and with, the meanings that were available to them” in Cape Town at the close of the nineteenth century (2013:2). The promise of equality in the Cape for black men and women was primarily via education, argues Collis, “that if they gained the accoutrements of civilisation, they would be equal before the law” (Collis, 2013:5–6). English manners, language and fashions,¹³⁷ as ‘accoutrements of civilisation’, would ensure participation in social life in the Cape, and in forms of global modernity (ibid.). However, Kwezi Mkhize points to the cultural conflicts of this black elite, as “theirs was a struggle to wrestle the grammars [of Englishness] into a form that included blackness in its regime of belonging” (2015:v).

The photographs in *The Black Photo Album*, were produced “not just from a desire to be seen, but to be seen through a self-selected mix of current fashions and shifting global styles [as] a form of active self-authorship” (Dodd, 2015:158). Explains Mofokeng,

... when we look at [the photographs] we believe them, for they tell us a little about how these people imagined themselves. We see these images in the terms determined by the subjects themselves, for they have made them their own.” (2013:1)

The digitally re-worked portraits offer a counter-archive to the collective memories of black identities at the turn of the century, and challenge the persistently “prevailing, contemporary impressions of Africa, and Africans, based on the damaging legacy of colonial photography,” argues Alex Dodd (2015:157–158). It is through this project, suggests Dodd, that Mofokeng wanted to,

... recover a different sense of the past and show the complex modernity of black family life ... [to counter] publications of the early 20th century, such as *Native Life in South Africa* (1936) or A.M. Duggan-Cronin’s ethnographic study *The Bantu Tribes of South Africa* (1928–1954), that had seemed so intent on representing black people as resistant to change, perpetually locked into old, rural and tribal cultures (2015:156).

In a similar effort to rethink ‘Bushman dress’ as represented in the Bleek and Lloyd, Dorothea Bleek, and Louis Fourie collections,¹³⁸ archaeologist Vibeke Viestad argues for a review of the ‘social relations’ as reflected in the representations of dress found across the material artefacts, notebooks and photographs of these early twentieth-century collections (2014:15).¹³⁹ The construction of the myth of the ‘nearly-naked Bushmen,’ the maintenance of this ‘image,’ and the perpetuation of the notion of ‘undress’ or ‘non-dress’ in the museum

136 Zonnebloem College was opened in Cape Town in 1858 by the Anglican Church, with the express “intention to educate the children of the native elite ... its graduates were meant to be black Englishmen [and women] who could ease the tensions between white settlers, the British colonial state, and the newly conquered black subjects” (Collis, 2013:5).

137 Robert Ross describes this uptake of, and at times resistance to, European dress across the globe as a combination of force and willingness arguing that, “the history of most, though not all, hitherto existing sartorial regimes has been the history of struggle – class, gender-based, ethnic or national (2008:8). Ross points to the ways in which clothing was used by “those who wished to determine the structure of society ... for those who wished to take on better positions, as well as for those who wished to deny [others] the possibility of social mobility” particularly evident at the interface between colonial and indigenous peoples (ibid.). See also editor, Hildi Hendrikson’s *Clothing and Difference: Embodied Identities in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa* (1996), editor, Wendy Parkins’ *Fashioning the Body Politic: Dress, Gender, Citizenship* (2002), and Robert Duplessis’ *The Material Atlantic: Clothing, Commerce, and Colonization in the Atlantic World, 1650–1800* (2015).

138 Dorothea Bleek’s collection of ethnographic objects together with her research notebooks forms part of the larger Bleek and Lloyd collection (Viestad, 2014:16). These artefacts are stored at the Iziko Museums Social History Centre and McGregor Museum in Kimberley (Viestad, 2014:97). Louis Fourie collected around 3500 artefacts, the majority of which are housed at Museum Africa, Johannesburg (Viestad, 2014: 213).

139 Viestad points to the ways in which the collectors’ different research approaches resulted in differing representations of ‘Bushman’ dress, social relations and identities in the collections.

notes¹⁴⁰ and literature had an impact on what was collected in terms of 'Bushmen dress' (Viestad, 2014:37). Dell points to this construct of the myth of 'nakedness' in two separate photographs, taken by visiting British anthropologists Alfred Haddon and Henry Balfour in the early twentieth century, where "the same Bushman, stands naked against a stone and corrugated iron wall" with a pile of clothes at his side, that include a hat, belt and shoes (Dell, 1994:244).

Although the museums, missionaries, researchers and collectors only collected 'authentic' or 'traditional' objects of *dress/fashion*, they all participated in the trade of Western goods when securing various exchanges, acknowledging that Western clothing was widely worn, and well received by 'the subjects in the field.'¹⁴¹ In the early twentieth century, then museum director, Perinquey instructed museum modeler James Drury that,

... [he] get at the store the shirts and petticoats suitable for trade with the Bush people, ...
[and, whilst in the field, he would] endeavour to buy garments or arms of these bush people
in order to clothe the reproductions ... but only provided their garments or arms are not
Manchester or Birmingham goods (SAM Letterbook, 1908).

The duplicity of museums in this exchange meant that although the South African Museum traded on the value of Western dress in their negotiations, they disavowed any form of sartorial 'hybridity' in their displays. That choices made by dealers, collectors and traders often followed directives from museums is evident in the many, 'purpose-made for sale' objects of material culture, such as beadwork, head-rests, pots, or clothing, that entered museum collections. Nettleton argues that goods showing an obvious 'lack of use' were made for European collectors and researchers in response to demands for specific objects that answered to explicit ideas about authenticity and 'culture' (2016:505).

The collection of material culture objects at the South African Museum was largely accomplished through funded fieldtrips, resulting in multiple purchases from each expedition, noted in the museum's accession registers. Dell argues that the specific cultural and ethnographic interests of the museum motivated the purchases made, largely driven by,

... a desire to preserve an authentic, mythical Africa in the face of destructive historical change
... sustaining these cultures within an ahistorical eternal present, which abstracted them and
resolved them into dichotomies and essences, and [furthermore] denied them any potential to
change (1994:250).

TRADITIONS OF COLLECTING

The ongoing production, and persistent maintenance of particular Western categories of thought, aesthetics and constructs of knowledge, resulted from the "oppressive and condemnatory logic of coloniality," argues Mignolo (2011:45–46). These constructs manifested through multiple knowledge mechanisms, including museums, media, and academia. The colonial ideologies underpinning the collecting practices of the South African Museum would continue to be "skewed by assumptions ... about what constituted a traditional African reality, based on now defunct principles of ethnohistory, which held that distinct tribes existed, each having a common origin, language, culture and tradition" (Liebhammer and Bila, 2011:89).

140 In Bleek's notes on a field trip in 1928, she describes a subject in the field, whose "own leather dress or undress is not odiferous" (Bleek 1928:12 cited by Viestad 2014:48). This is also witnessed in Wilhelm Bleek's anthropometric photographs of the 1870s taken under specific instructions to "place the 'objects' naked in front of the camera" (Viestad 2014:39).

141 This practice of exchange was well established by the early twentieth century, as missionaries and colonists in the nineteenth century had long recognised the role dress played as both "commodity and a social accoutrement" (Comaroff, 1997:400).

The new disciplines of social and cultural anthropology,¹⁴² ethnography and ethnology developed substantially, both internationally and locally, in the first half of the twentieth century. The simultaneous establishment of a white hegemony in South Africa meant that racial science would be used to support the implementation of policies and practices of racial segregation through the scientific contributions towards ideas and identities of difference. As Liebhammer and Vonani Bila argue, the assumptions of “the primitiveness of the people that had prompted early missionaries to collect objects of material culture, were particularly promoted by the South African government” (2011:89).

This was certainly the case with the longstanding, “mutually beneficial relationship” between South African museum anthropologist Shaw and government ethnologist Nicolaas van Warmelo (Cedras, 2016:54).¹⁴³ Shaw joined the museum in 1933 and, working closely with van Warmelo’s publication, *A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of Southern Africa* (published in 1935),¹⁴⁴ developed the museum’s definitive, linguistically-based, ‘tribal’ classification structure that would be used throughout the rest of the twentieth century.¹⁴⁵

The classification of African languages and ‘tribes’ as carried out by van Warmelo¹⁴⁶ (and implemented by Shaw in the museum), consolidated the notion of ‘ethnic’ construction; as Sarah Pugach explains,

... [they] fixed ‘tribal’ ethnicity to provide ‘order’ to what, for whites, may have appeared a jumbled mass of peoples whose relationships to one another were not immediately discernible
... [these] were of increasing concern to white South Africans (2004:825).

That these ‘tribal’ classifications are “yoked together [with tradition] in the service of colonial and later apartheid rule” argue Hamilton and Leibhammer, further perpetuated, and continue to frame “ideas of the past, and its objects, as primitive, timeless, and unchanging, and sharply distinguished from modernity” (2016:14). The objects that entered the South African Museum largely reiterated these sharp distinctions between indigenous artefacts – that were framed, and named, by their ‘tribal’ associations – and Western objects – that were identified historically or specifically (with regards to their owner or maker). The museum’s acquisition register of 1933, for example, reflects the following disparate artefacts accessioned under the heading, *Native Curios*, namely a grass bangle,¹⁴⁷ Sura hunting cap,¹⁴⁸ Ovambo snuffbox,¹⁴⁹ Ashanti clay figure,¹⁵⁰ Herero assegai,¹⁵¹ Royal Worcester tea service,¹⁵² and a Boer War uniform.¹⁵³

Although some objects of western material culture did enter the collection, such as Lord Byron’s jacket (which has since been ‘lost’), or the Boer War uniform (noted above), western sartorial objects were largely redirected to other museums, or collectors. I discuss the fate of these, and other, western sartorial objects in the next section of this chapter. The radical segregation of the material cultures of black and white South Africans

142 For a detailed study of the division in English and Afrikaans speaking universities that spearheaded the development of anthropology, and the relationship of academic research and museum representations, see Barnard (2007:41–44).

143 I discuss their role in the development of the classification system of the museum in Chapter Two.

144 Pugach argues that van Warmelo’s publication used “language as a marker to appraise ethnicity; [yet] in some cases it was also employed language to make assumptions about biology and race” that laid the groundwork for segregationist policies (2004:835).

145 This classification system still governs the objects from the ethnographic collections in the Iziko Social History collections during my study.

146 Van Warmelo promoted language as his preferred method of ‘tribal’ classification, noting that language persisted even as other outward cultural differences (such as clothing) had declined (Pugach, 2004:834). Van Warmelo’s survey follows a well-established approach as already, “by the late nineteenth century, missionaries and others, in codifying the languages of the indigenous people reduced the main oral dialects to standardised written versions, that result[ed] in ethnographic classifications of the African people based solely on language” (Davison, 2010:507).

147 SAM5298

148 SAM5394

149 SAM5436

150 SAM5452

151 SAM5476

152 SAM5492

153 SAM5500

engineered by the South African Museum, followed the election of the conservative National Party in 1948. The splitting of the museum's collections over the next two decades and would further establish the singular focus of the South African Museum as the collector, and keeper of the material cultures of black South Africans only.

As such, the museum maintained the steady practice of purchasing 'traditional' objects of adornment, together with other items, such as musical instruments, basketry, or weapons. In the 1960s, such sourcing fieldtrips and research-led expeditions undertaken by the museum, included trips to Herschel, Basutoland, Zululand, Swaziland, the Transvaal and Cape Provinces, the Transkei and Botswana.¹⁵⁴ This active pursuit of objects to purchase southern African 'traditions' continued unabated in the 1970s, with fieldtrips headed by the anthropologist, Dr. Mirwich over four consecutive years between 1970 and 1973, as well as museum-led expeditions to Botswana, Lebowa, Bushmanland and Gazankulu.

Each of these trips reinforced the division between African 'tradition' and western modernity. It was only in the late 1970s that the first purchases of African material culture from urban areas entered the museum – these included baskets, mats, wall hangings and wire toys, bought from cultural collectives making contemporary crafts, such as in Eshowe (1978), and in Johannesburg (1980). It would take another almost twenty years before sartorial objects that reflected notions of hybridity or modernity would enter the museum's collection, when four pairs of repurposed western trousers entered the collection in the early 1990s.

THE BEADWORK DEALER

Following a particularly turbulent decade, many of the museum's professionals, anthropologists, and practitioners were confronted with critical, and politically 'difficult' questions demanding a necessary review of their field of practice in the early nineties (Klinghardt, 1991). Klinghardt ask, "Why this change?" when at the beginning of 1991, the South African Museum's Department of Ethnography was renamed to African Studies & Anthropology (ibid.). Klinghardt suggests that the change in name "signifies an intention to expand the scope of the department to engage in interdisciplinary projects", to disassociate from the previous frameworks of race and 'ethnicity', and to be considered as inclusive and open to change (ibid.).

The following year saw then Museum Anthropologist, Patricia Davison discuss the notion of 'museum representations of other cultures' at *Myths, Monuments and Museums*, a History Workshop at the University of Witwatersrand (1992). These museal self-critiques reflected a shift in the locus of authority in museums,¹⁵⁵ both locally and globally. It is within the context of these museal and political 'turmoils' that I briefly describe the role of beadwork collector and dealer Long¹⁵⁶ in relation to the South African Museum and its sartorial collection.

Between 1986 and 1996, Long sold beadwork to the South African Museum, mostly items of adornment, but also other objects, such as ornaments, textiles or quivers. Long recalls that the museum would purchase "between twenty and thirty objects each time, and sometimes, more".¹⁵⁷ Long's personal attraction to beadwork (Kaufmann, 2011b:xi), and a strong "rescue impulse" led him firstly to collect as widely in the area as he could, and secondly to promote the uptake of beadwork by a range of museums.¹⁵⁸ Considering the disciplinary divides and the contemporary politics, Long's interdisciplinary approach – selling to the South

154 The Apartheid Government established ten Bantustans or homelands, areas to which the majority of the Black population was moved to prevent them from living in the urban areas of South Africa.

155 I discuss the museum interventions that responded directly to these shifts in Chapter Three.

156 Framed against harsh and violent apartheid realities of the late eighties, and mounting social resistance, Long described the dangers of being "a white man in the field" during these politically charged times with incidences of mistrust, betrayal and good fort. At the same time, Long experienced distrust from friends and family as the result of beadwork's long-held identity as "rural, unhygienic and uncivilised" and furthermore troubled by beadwork's relationship to witchcraft. Long's collection of favourite items in his bedroom had a strong presence (smell) and 'energy' that scared many visitors. Long, personal interview, 03/09/15.

157 "I would park my truck outside the museum and they would make their selections," Long, personal interview, 03/09/15. Long sold beadwork to collector Allan Lieberman in Johannesburg, other dealers, academics such as Karel Nel, Alan Crump and Anitra Nettleton, and museum specialists and curators, not only in South Africa, such as Albany Museum, East London Museum, Wits Art Museum, Ditsong Museum, Johannesburg Art Gallery, but also in the United Kingdom (Kaufmann, 2011b:xi).

158 Long, personal interview, 03/09/15.

African Museum, as well as the South African National Gallery, and by 1994, the South African Cultural History Museum – was quite remarkable, and noteworthy to this thesis.

Long's extended field work proved useful as he developed a greater appreciation for and understanding of the places, languages, and role of beadwork than many museum practitioners, ethnologists or anthropologists who would generally have had far less immersive experience of the objects in their collections. Until there are radical museal shifts in terms of employment, the sustained pattern of white 'specialists' in charge of 'black subjects and their objects' remains problematic.

LEADING TO DEMOCRACY

One further shift in the collecting practices of the South African Museum occurred in the 1990s. Although hats and sandals – that could be considered 'western' – entered the collection since the 1890s, these objects were 'made by' black South Africans and deemed authentic in this regard. It is then noteworthy to consider the active acquisitions of western t-shirts (mostly made in China) into the collection almost one hundred years later. Throughout the anti-apartheid struggle, black and white protestors, activists and primarily black mourners wore protest t-shirts (Williamson, 2004:93). Many of these political t-shirts entered the museum's ethnographic collection via donations by museum staff, which Davison,¹⁵⁹ Klinghardt and Lalou Meltzer. Records of the t-shirts donated by these white staff members to the museum, however do not indicate whether they themselves had worn the t-shirts or they had actively collected the artefacts from other wearers for the museum. As powerful sartorial weapons, the provenance of the political t-shirt lies in relation to the activity, event, or message printed on the t-shirt, rather than the identity of the wearer (Maynard, 2002:201).¹⁶⁰ Also collected at Museum Africa¹⁶¹ and the South African History Archive (SAHA), protest t-shirts as temporary, yet immediate markers of identity, became important reflections of black agency and indices for black bodies in South African museum collections, prior to, during and immediately after the political transition to democracy.

These efforts brought western items into the otherwise non-western ethnographic collections, reflecting for the first time, the sartorial realities of urban South Africans. The almost total exclusion of western objects from the sartorial collections of the South African Museum thus presented, and continues to present, skewed histories of black fashion histories in South Africa. The formation of Iziko Museums in 1999 – as a merger of separate museums and their collections, ideologies, staff, and collective institutional acumen – would enact a reversal of the segregation of the material cultures of black and white South Africans instituted in the 1960s. The process of re-integrating the sartorial objects into one, inclusive collection has been protracted and remains largely incomplete, complicated by the multiple inherited disciplinary differences. Hamilton and Liebhammer argue that African sartorial materials are remain distinctly marked as 'traditional',

... [relying on an] ethnographic exoticism, sometimes part of the international appeal of these objects. [Yet, this] contributes to the anathema with which they are viewed by South Africans, anxious to claim the modernity denied them by colonialism and apartheid (2014:156–7).

A SUMMARY OF THE SARTORIAL IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM

Three observations are evident in this interrogation of the origination, development, and evolution of the sartorial in the South African Museum's collection. The first concerns the limited and narrow framing of what was deemed 'traditional' and therefore collectable by the museum, largely determined by broader colonial anthropological practices, and the selective isolation of the 'other' as 'exotic'. These dispositions

159 For example, SAM13801 donated by then museum director Davison in 1990.

160 In much the same way, the provenance of the 'first' pink pussy-hat, a protest garment acquired by the V&A Museum through their Rapid Response Collecting programme, recognises who made it for, Jayna Zweiman, and not who wore it at, the Women's March, 21 January 2017 (Jones, 2017).

161 Diana Wall, personal interview, 30/09/15.

both determined what entered the collection, and what would come to define the 'canon' of African sartorial collections, notions that were reproduced in museums (and publications) locally and internationally throughout the twentieth century, namely objects of 'tradition', permanently framed outside of the realm of 'fashion'.

The second observation reflects the notion of ethnographic objects as 'specimens', where the importance lies not with the individual object, but with relationships between the objects, reducing sartorial objects collected by the South African Museum to types within a range of possibilities. The collecting practices, and in this way the development of the collection, aimed to complete a representative selection of the indigenous material cultures at hand, and museum expeditions were designed and funded to fulfill these needs. Thirdly, relating to the collecting practices themselves and the disciplinary frameworks governing these practices is the resultant absence of the owner and/or wearer identities of the items within the collection. These records were largely never acquired, nor required and are consequently, forever lost. The sartorial in the South African Museum therefore reflects a singular, stereotyped and timeless selection of what black South Africans wore and how they expressed their identities.

The manner in which change was or was not integrated into indigenous cultural practices was largely ignored and denied space in the collections and thereby, notions of modernity, progress and both technological and sartorial developments were excluded from the record. The sartorial amalgamation of the ethnographic collection – from a timeless past or 'other,' non-western world – with the objects of the other museum collections – deeply steeped in history and modernity – has been greatly hindered by this distinctiveness. A study of the development and evolution of the sartorial in the Cultural History Museum will begin to illustrate how sharply distinct the notion of *dress/fashion* have been considered, framed and understood within a different discipline, that of cultural history.

THE MAKING OF THE CULTURAL HISTORY MUSEUM COLLECTION

The South African Museum's need for a dedicated, and separate 'cultural history' space in the early twentieth century, prompted the opening of the Koopmans-de Wet House as a museum on 10 March 1914. This followed a public auction of the de Wet family home and objects from their private collections in April 1913, where the specially created National Committee, chaired Mr. Purcell, acquired the house and contents for the Trustees of the South African Museum (Vollgraaff, 1998:3). The prominent de Wet family had owned and occupied the house in Strand Street for just over a century, with sisters Marie Koopmans-de Wet and Margaretha de Wet, as the final tenants. They had accrued a collection of objects from laces and jewelry to books, maps, photographs and manuscripts, furniture, art, glass, china and silverware that would come to define what was to become the Cultural History Museum collection fifty years later.¹⁶²

As early as 1936, and again after the Second World War in 1947, it was noted that a more urgent desire to establish a new and separate museum was favoured by various members of the advisory board at the South African Museum (Vollgraaff, 1998:4). A special committee was formed with Hilda Buyskes as secretary¹⁶³ to defend the future of "the collection and conservation of costumes, furniture and Africana that relates to Cape Town's history",¹⁶⁴ with the recommendation that a new site be made available to showcase and store these objects (Vollgraaff, 1998:4). Furthermore, the *Du Toit Commission Report*¹⁶⁵ made specific recommendations about how the heritage of different groups should be displayed and communicated: stating that there should

162 Public comments were printed in newspapers with regards the focus of the auction and various values that supported the purchases. Hisham, email correspondence, 16/09/16.

163 Buyskes also donated approximately 150 artefacts that included domestic and personal objects, such as lace, jewellery, and various dresses, skirts, waistcoats and shawls. See Donor File, B.

164 My translation, as Vollgraaff writes "die insameling en bewaring van kostuums, meubels en Africana wat met Kaapstad se geskiedenis verband hou" (1998:4).

165 The *Du Toit Report* was commissioned by the National Party government in 1948 as a result of new heritage demands (Rodehn, 2011:281).

be a “distinct emphasis on the technological advancement and the European context as a point of reference for whites ... to create unity and to highlight their difference from the rest of the population” (Du Toit Report 1949:192–194, cited in Rodehn 2011:280–281). As part of the mid-century “normative political agenda, [the report specified] the need to display whites’ technological superiority” (Rodehn, 2011:281). Although there were no official sanctioned guidelines for how this would be manifested, the report recommended that museums,

... present whites’ origins as European ... and display this through aspects such as Christianity, science, modern navigation, printing and warfare ... using evidently, comparative displays between [whites] and ‘others’ in Africa (ibid.).

Museum historian R.H. Summers claims that due to developments at the South African Museum there was little available space¹⁶⁶ (1975:98–102), and even less available museum management skills for any ‘extra’ collections, such as cultures of western cultural history (1975:143–147). By 1961 an internal commission of enquiry recommended that the museum therefore “separate the natural and cultural history collections to form two separate museums” (Sam Report, 9 August 1961). Those involved in the decisions to separate the collections were politically conservative and “ideologically motivated men, keen for a new history museum that would support the Apartheid dream,” argues erstwhile museum director¹⁶⁷ Aaron Mazel (2013:167). Mazel explains that,

... prior to joining the Board, many of these ideologues had already played significant national roles in the promotion of white and Afrikaner culture as role-players in the 1952 tercentenary Van Riebeeck Festival, which had functioned as a public display of exclusive nation building and served as an example of the way that a specific version of culture was manipulated and presented as authentically South African as part of a wider white nation-building project (2013:168).

While museum historian Helene Vollgraaff recognises the impact of national politics in the development of the Cultural History Museum,

... the museum was also the result of a long support-canvassing process by the white population of Cape Town – Afrikaans and English speaking – to establish a cultural history museum in Cape Town to provide a suitable home [for the South African Museum’s cultural and historical collections] (1998:3).

The new museum, originally named the South African Museum (Cultural History), officially opened its doors on 6 April 1966 in the Old Slave Lodge.¹⁶⁸ With an appeal to the Department of Education, Arts and Science for a new name for the museum (that more clearly showed its separate status), the South African Cultural History Museum was declared on 27 June 1969, comprising of the Old Slave Lodge, Koopmans-De-Wet House Museum, and Groot Constantia (Vollgraaff, 1998:8). After a period as government offices, the Old Slave Lodge housed the Supreme Court and later the Post Office, until it became home to the new Cultural History Museum in 1964 (Vollgraaff, 1997:7). In order for the building to become home to the museum, it was renovated in

166 Showing comparable concerns, the Natal Museum had collected and displayed colonial and African material culture together “until the museum ran out of space” in 1909 (Natal Museumport, 1909, cited in Rodehn, 2011:280). With increasing interest in collecting African material culture, the museum elected to showcase ‘culture’ via the indigenous, and ‘history’ via European settler history – racial divisions of collection and display that continued well into the 1960s (Rodehn, 2011:280).

167 Mazel was the Cultural History Museum director from 1998–2002.

168 Built in 1679 as a slave lodge for the Dutch East India Company, the building on the corner of Adderley and Wale Street in Cape Town changed through various phases of British, Dutch and South African rule after its closure as a slave lodge in 1811.

1959, “effectively erasing the original building’s history” (Fransen 1971:2–3).¹⁶⁹

The Cultural History Museum – as a fully-fledged, independent museum – was committed to the “presentation and housing of white South African and European materials and history” with cultural and historical collections that focused on the supremacy of Europe and the European colonisation of South Africa, as well as collections of ancient, classic civilisations such as Greek, Roman and Egyptian cultures (Mazel, 2013:166–7).¹⁷⁰ The distinguishing feature that would determine which objects would remain with the South African Museum, and which would be transferred to the new museum, was their racial association and identification. All objects of white or European cultural origin or relation, would be separated from the South African Museum collection, as well as selected objects from elsewhere in the world – such as Egyptian, Chinese, Tahitian, and North African objects – leaving only the artefacts that belonged to the indigenous peoples of southern Africa in the South African Museum.

Mary Cook was employed at the South African Museum in 1958 as the first historian, with the aim that she would accurately identify and document the ‘cultural history’ collections at the museum.¹⁷¹ Vollgraaff notes that by 1961, a ‘cultural history’ department was established within the South African Museum made up of “one specialist, one conservator and two shoemakers” (1998:5). The objects identified as ‘belonging to cultural history’ were compiled in what would become the *Transfer Register*¹⁷² of about ten thousand artefacts. This included domestic items, furniture, clothing, farm equipment, prints, paintings, weapons and coins. Items deemed to be ‘cultural history’ and no longer ‘natural history’ in the *Antiquities Registers* were crossed through.¹⁷³ Two new *Accession Registers*¹⁷⁴ were created in the late 1950s that recorded the transfer of the objects from the South African Museum, as well as the acquisition of sizable donations from benefactors, such as Mr. de Pass from the Groot Constantia Museum and the British Archaeological Society.

Summers describes how the museum developed in two stages; firstly, the physical separation of the museum sites, the collections and the employees¹⁷⁵ that occupied most of 1963–64, and secondly, the establishment of the museum that took place between 1965 and 1966 (1975:177–178). A cataloguing system, introduced in 1964 for any new acquisitions identified as ‘cultural history’, meant that objects were accessioned via both catalogue cards and accession registers. The second *Accession Register* ended at number 6167. However, a further two thousand items still needed to be registered – these only have a catalogue card record and were never recorded as a double entry. They included a wide variety of objects such as coins, knives, scissors, crockery, domestic ware, statues, dolls, portraits, photographs, as well as textiles, clothing, accessories and laces. The inventory delays, in relation to the splitting of the collections, continued well into the 1970s, with some of the last entries noted in the catalogue cards having accession dates as late as 1977.

REGISTERS OF OBJECTS OF CULTURE

The *Accessions Register No. 1* began with two gueridons without accession dates or donor names,¹⁷⁶ a

169 Fransen identifies the Cultural History Museum as the “best example of an important monument turned into a museum. Apart from being an historical museum, it bears no relation to the building’s original functions. We cannot do better than to discuss requirements and possibilities of this sort of museum by analyzing this fine example” (1971:2–3).

170 Similarly, the National Cultural History and Open-Air Museum, Pretoria aimed to collect and showcase the “objects of the culture of the white language groups in South Africa, as well as ethnographic material of the non-white groups in South Africa, and comparative material from other parts of the world (Grobler, 2006:110).

171 Minutes of a South African Museum board meeting in 1963 note the full inventorisation of the cultural history material in October 1963 (SAM Report 3 October 1963, p.2).

172 Hisham located a total of eighty-four existing accession registers relating to the material collections of Iziko to date. The *Transfer Register* is the first document of the cultural history collection.

173 Each of these had a later note added, “To History, checked 1983 (LM)” Checked by Lalou Meltzer.

174 *Accessions Registers*, No. 1 (1–4131) and No. 2 (4132–6165).

175 Two separate boards and semi-autonomous departments were established in 1964 (Summers, 1975:177). The division of the museum is noted in the SAM Report (5 December 1963:2).

176 1(a) and 1(b) are small, circular-topped tables supported by sculpted columns.

Stinkwood bureau,¹⁷⁷ a variety of domestic items – silver spoons, clocks, paintings, goblets, candlesticks, a pencil case, matchbox and wine coaster, (mostly from Koopmans-de Wet Museum), and the first sartorial items in the register: a pair of paste shoe buckles.¹⁷⁸ Other accessories and items related to adornment also feature in the general listing of objects in this register, such as jewelry items, fans,¹⁷⁹ brooches¹⁸⁰ and Egyptian necklaces, beads and charms.¹⁸¹ However, apart from these accessories, all other sartorial objects were in some way ‘set aside’ and not recorded in the register until accession number 2000, when almost three hundred *dress/fashion* objects are listed consecutively. I propose that these sartorial objects were either housed in a separate storeroom or location, or they were placed to one side in the inventurisation process, although I was unable to establish any details regarding this.

Approximately three hundred sartorial items, which included dresses, coats, capes, skirts and waistcoats, were initially accessioned in the first register.¹⁸² Further space was left blank in the register to accommodate another two hundred items.¹⁸³ Almost all of the three hundred objects were ‘acquired’ by the museum in three separate years – 1959, 1963 and 1964 – suggesting a number of possibilities: there was a surge of interest in collecting fashion;¹⁸⁴ there was a lag in accessioning as critical decisions were being made; or, some sizable donations were made. In 1960 Cook, in charge of the Department of Cultural History and Africana explains how,

... the Department is much indebted to the Historical Museum Society, which for many years has been collecting [costume] material for such a museum as is to be started in the Old Supreme Court, and in particular to Miss Hilda Buyskes. We are also grateful to Miss Elise Cloete and Miss Marie Cloete, and to the Rev. B Jeffcoat, and to many others [for their donations] (SAM Report, 1960:13).

One further possibility however, suggests that up until 1959, there was a question with regards to the *dress/fashion* objects themselves, and whether these were to be accessioned to the museum as legitimate museum artefacts at all. The sartorial collection, totaling almost three hundred items at this stage, was comprised mostly of ladies ‘period costume’ or historical fashion – the only menswear items in the register were waistcoats. The catalogue card entries from 6167 to 8000, however included a further, almost six hundred sartorial objects, consisting of socks, shawls, uniforms, coats, more dresses, textile fragments, laces, muffs, hats, waistcoats, shoes, suits and shoe buckles. By the end of the 1960s, there were approximately one thousand *dress/fashion* objects in the collection, thus forming a vital component towards the establishment of the Cultural History Museum.

However, no black South African had worn or owned any of these sartorial items. There were also no sartorial objects of indigenous origin accessioned to the Cultural History Museum at this time. The racial identification and transfer of objects to the new museum had been so thorough that I only discovered one ‘slippage,’ of single a sartorial remnant of indigenous origin: a ‘fragment’ entered in Accession Register 2. The catalogue card describes the object as, ‘Ornament; portion of beadwork, donated by Mrs. T.T.C. Purland, Kenilworth,

177 Miss Buyskes donated the bureau in/from 1914.

178 No. 18(a) and 18(b) were two English Victorian shoe buckles donated by the Daniel Krynauw Collection in 1914. Various other shoe buckles are recorded in the register (Koopmans De Wet collection, 1913; presented by W.A. de Klerk, 1949; and, the Heller Collection, n/d.) These objects had circulated as desirable commodities since the eighteenth century and, originally in real gold and silver, and later produced in paste, they signified great wealth and authority. These were also often included in the detailed household inventories of prominent Cape businessmen from the late 1700s (Worden, 2012:53–54).

179 Presented by E. Meeck in 1895, accession number 896. Other fans include an ivory fan accessioned in 1907 as a donation by G. Alang Esq. (1164) and an Indian sandalwood fan (1163).

180 Mrs Rupert and Mrs Reynolds donated gold, silver, filigree and enamel brooches (1169–1173).

181 These were part of the British School of Archaeology donation in 1912 (1607–1647).

182 Accession numbers 2000–2290.

183 No other gaps were left for other objects elsewhere in the registers.

184 Roodt-Coetzee supplemented the existing collection at the Transvaal Museum by way of press and radio in the late 1950s “with very positive responses from the public” (Grobler, 2007:90).

This division of objects and people into two museums in mid-twentieth century South Africa staged and separated, black from white, tradition from modernity, and culture from history. This forced museal segregation ensured that there was nowhere for the collection, classification or display of sartorial objects that belonged to black South Africans who engaged in modern, largely western identity practices. The heightened segregation of both people and objects made it "impossible for museums to represent a multicultural heritage" instead they intensified distinct, and particularly racial, identifications (Rodehn, 2008:41).

MID-CENTURY STYLE AND SARTORIAL POLITICS

After the South Africa National Party won the 1948 elections, apartheid policies intensified as efforts to formalise the segregation of South Africans were promulgated with, for example, the *Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act 1949* or *Population Registration Act 1950*. These repressive legislations radically reduced opportunities for black South Africans to participate freely in processes of urbanisation, education and employment. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s forced removals also displaced thousands of black, Indian and Coloured families and communities under the *Group Areas Act* of 1950, for example in Sophiatown (1955), Duncan Village (1964) and District Six (1966). Pass Law uprisings and massacres such as those in Sharpeville and Langa in 1960 resulted in widespread protest and violence, and further acts of draconian political oppression.

Simultaneously, 'homelands' were developed by the South African government as separate, divided nation-states for variously identified, 'ethnic' groups. The main purpose of the 'homelands,' was the elimination as far as possible, of a settled urban African population (Rabkin, 1975:16). As a form of social engineering by the government, these separatist developments "ensured minimal political rights" and further imposed social, educational and cultural restrictions (Rabkin, 1975:12). Yet, black South Africans became celebrated writers, politicians, singers, actors, businessmen, models, photographers, pastors, soccer stars and boxers. Many of these mid-century, socially mobile Africans were regularly featured in popular media such as *Drum* magazine. They would,

... play an important role in the future. The old illiterate Africa of blankets and reserves, however picturesque, is insignificant in the face of this new industrial proletariat. The urban African is not merely an unhappy displaced person, torn up from his roots; amidst the chaos and bewilderment of the shantytowns, there is emerging a large settled community (Rabkin, 1975:1).

The popular 1950s identity of the 'perfect gentleman/gangster-with-a-heart' – as urban, sophisticated, smartly dressed and charming – epitomised the writers in *Drum* magazine and was reflected in both its images and reportage (Farber, 2015:115–116). The magazine mostly covered black urban life, namely the cultures colours, sounds and styles, that together with the dreams, hopes, ambitions and struggles presented by new Africans seen as "urbanised, eager, fast-talking and brash" (ibid.). Farber positions the 'sartorial sophistication' within,

... a wider project of resisting tribalism and the credo of separate development. The writers at *Drum* took the already subversive element of American culture and appropriated it to black South Africa. They were thus able to create a figure, who was an economic rebel at home in, and defined by, his black urban context. This appropriation in turn allowed them ... to elaborate in their own society a subject-position that was attractive to those who were trying to create for themselves a 'truly' black South African cultural identity (2015:116).

185 SACHM6080 TRAD

The notion of fashion, identity and urbanity coalesced in media spaces such as *Drum*, and social spaces such as District Six and Sophiatown where hubs of black and mixed race, cultural production and politics formed. Femininity was portrayed via the eurocentric 1950s New Look glamour,¹⁸⁶ while the western suit was pivotal to the image of modern, urban African masculinity.¹⁸⁷

These places represented not only a lifestyle, but they portrayed “a modernity, of the self-made identities showing incredible tenacity and flexibility – often drawing on American popular culture, film, jazz, oral histories and hybrid identities” (Ribane 2006:41). Fashion played a vital role in these identity constructs. Writer Nakedi Ribane describes how,

... when the people went to the cities to look for jobs, they adapted in every way to city life, including the way they dressed. If you look at pictures taken in the 40s and 50s, my parents’ generation, you realise how sophisticated in style the Black people of that time were. Even in the rural areas, where the missionary influence showed, people looked quite dandy, the men in their suits and felt hats with feathers on the side, the women demure in their smart but conservative two-piece suits and long dresses, with small pinball hats, kangora berets and half-moon felt or straw hats (2006:46–7).

The film, *Jim Comes to Joburg* (1949)¹⁸⁸ shows Jim, the protagonist, “discard his traditional apparel for Western-type trousers and coat ... signif[ying] the beginnings of a transformation from a distinctively traditional past to a decidedly modern future” (Modisane, 2015:245).¹⁸⁹ Litheko Modisane argues, that albeit contrived and biased, the film’s focus on “black identity and modernity constitutes its salience as an instance of the role of cinema in the construction of black urban identity [and modernity] in South Africa” (2015:244). Modisane explores the ways in which the film addresses the cultural make-up of black urban life that escapes the boundaries of “colonial ideological policing” (2015:249).

While *Jim Comes to Joburg* presented a fictive account of the negotiation between new and old identities, many migrant workers experienced and explored the role of *dress/fashion* in their journeys between the urban worlds of worker hostels¹⁹⁰ and their rural homesteads. *Swenking* evolved “as a vestimentary performance essential to the preservation of culture, identity and pride,” explains Enrica Picarelli (2015:213). Displaying “sartorial wit and cleanness ... as visible signs of self-determination, *Swenkas* expressed an awareness of the politics of representation responsible for reproducing racial inequalities” (Picarelli, 2015:211). The formal dress code invited deference and showed affluence, but also, argues Picarelli,

... signaled a new knowledge of the self, born from the marginalisation and racism the men, as migrant workers, experienced in the metropolis (2015:213).

Through the cinema, photography, and print-media these diverse, urban counter-narratives emerged and spread beyond the confines of apartheid control. New technologies in the 1950s allowed for a radical change in the redrawing of the cultural map with industrialisation and urbanisation as key factors in producing change. However, despite evidence of the development of black urban, hybrid modernities that troubled and blurred the binary distinctions of tradition and modernity, the construction of a singular, sartorial heritage via the collection of ‘traditional’ material cultures tended to “espouse a limited understanding of African culture, opting to confine

186 The New Look by Christian Dior in Paris in 1948 was introduced in response to rationing and portrayed a hyper-femininity that was very popular with female musicians, such as Miriam Makeba.

187 Suit advertisements reinforced links between urbanisation, westernisation and modernisation.

188 *Jim Comes to Joburg* (1949), made by two British immigrants to South Africa, Donald Swanson and Eric Rutherford, was the first South African film to feature black South Africans (Daniel Adnewmah, Dolly Rathebe and John Kani) in starring roles.

189 Modisane argues that the film goes further than “the painting of a simple nostalgia for the countryside – it hybridises the pre-modern with the modern” (2015:247).

190 *Swenking* involved a competition with an emphasis on fashion, style, deportment and good manners, which, when combined, determined the ‘perfect gentleman’. See Goeller (2014).

it along with Africans themselves to limited versions of rural traditionalism” (Modisane, 2015:235).

MovieSnaps (2014), a project conceptualised by Siona O’Connell, brought together snapshots of Cape Town visitors and residents dressed in their ‘Saturday best’ between the 1940s and 1970s and photographed by Movie Snaps studio photographers positioned outside the Cape Town General Post Office (Romano, 2015). These photographs offer a cross-cultural archive of Jewish, Muslim and Christian, as well as black, coloured and white women, men, teenagers, sailors, visitors, children and grandparents, all made equal via their participation in, and performance of, changing urban fashions.¹⁹¹ Public institutions, such as museums in control of the production and dissemination of social identities and histories prior to the dawn of democracy in 1994, vehemently denied evidence of equality witnessed via these embodied, sartorial narratives.

This disavowal of black modernities in South Africa reflected the comprehensive exclusion and marginalisation of black urban material culture in museums internationally. A recent purchase of a genuine zoot suit¹⁹² from the 1940s at an East Coast auction by the Los Angeles Contemporary Museum of Art (LACMA) saw an intensity of bidding that “soared in minutes, from an estimate of \$600 to \$900 to the high five figures, testament to the rareness of this item,” claimed the museum’s head of costume and textiles department, Sharon Takeda (Blanks, 2016). Stuart Cosgrove defines the oversized suit that was worn primarily by dispossessed urban black and Hispanic youths in 1940s America, as both “an emblem of ethnicity and way of negotiating an identity” (1984:137), and a symbol of the resistance or “gesture that refused to concede to the manners of subservience” (1984:78).

Similarly, the lack of diasporic fashion narratives of first generation Caribbeans in British museums and the lack of representation of Native American fashion in Canadian and North American museums, replicate this lacuna of indigenous, or non-western, urban, mid-century *dress/fashion* collections in museums. The wardrobes of *Drum* magazine celebrities, such as Can Themba, Dolly Rathebe or Miriam Makeba, or mid-century political activists, such as Amina Cachalia or Winnie Mandela, were neither collected, conserved, archived nor exhibited by any South African museum. Instead, the material culture of a western, European, white hegemony dominated – the cultural map of a global fashion narrative in museums locally, and internationally was indeed skewed to singularly identify as ‘white’.

DEVELOPING A ‘WHITE’ CULTURAL HERITAGE

Where the development of ethnographic collections relied largely on museum expeditions and purchases, as noted earlier with the South African Museum collection, the development of the Cultural History Museum’s collections almost solely resulted from donations and bequests. The donors’ racial, social or political identity and ‘cultural capital’ thus impacted directly on the dispositions of the museum’s collection. A brief overview of a donor’s influence is made possible through the lens of one such benefactor and the types of objects that, in this way, entered the collection.

Over a period of four decades, Reverend Reginald Jeffcoat made several significant donations to the museum totaling almost seven hundred items.¹⁹³ These included a large presentation in 1956¹⁹⁴ and another in 1959 of a wide range of objects, such as Dutch ornaments, a spicemill, underclothes, a knife, and a pair of paste shoe buckles that belonged to Judge Willem Hiddingh. Jeffcoat made many more generous donations over the next

191 Through the same series of photographs, the street snapshot of Kewpie forms an important discussion in Chapter Two.

192 The Zootsuit comprised a high waisted, wide-legged, tight-cuffed, pair of pegged trousers that was worn with a long coat with wide lapels and wide padded shoulders. The Zootsuit Riots were a result of post-WWII racist politics and power acted out via the bodies associated with the outfits. The importance of the suit is evident in that, since its purchase it has been shown in the LACMA exhibition *Reigning Men: Fashion in Menswear: 1715–2015* (2016), as part of the MoMa’s *Items: Is Fashion Modern?* (2017) exhibition, and in 2018, will be shown at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney.

193 Jeffcoat (1872–1974) also donated newspaper clippings, poems, cards and drawings to the University of Witwatersrand; a collection of papers to The Anglican Church; and, over 300 items, largely documents, engravings and prints, to the University of Cape Town’s Manuscript and Archives Department between 1950 and 1972.

194 Anthropology Accession register, 28 September 1956 (7645–7839).

three decades.¹⁹⁵ Dress objects were often included in these donations, such as lace collars, veils, cuffs and a top hat¹⁹⁶ received in 1964; bags, brooches, beadwork, mittens, hairpins, a purse, bracelets, a child's shoe,¹⁹⁷ and ten pieces of jewellery¹⁹⁸ were received in 1965; and, a pair of machine knitted socks¹⁹⁹ (wool, mended) and eight stiff white collars in a tin²⁰⁰ were accessioned in 1974.

Sartorial items, as objects of memory in museums, convey the values of their social, cultural and geo-political narratives long after they have entered the museums as traces of their embodiment in the original socio-cultural context of their past. The museum collection acts as witness to a kind of cultural seepage, leaking into objects that end up in the museums. Following closely the consumption patterns, social practices or cultural understandings of a Eurocentric 'heritage', the collections of the Cultural History Museum reflect a particularly skewed, European "extended self, [made possible] through the striving for immortality which collections represent" (Pearce, 1992:37). Daniela Gutierrez Lomez similarly points to the 'normative' notions that underpin museum practices, in her interrogation of the museumification effect of fashion,

... via the collection and display of decommodified objects – [which] affectively (re)produces normative gender, class and geopolitical hierarchies narrated and embodied in the garments and exhibitions (2014:ii).

Although museum director Wolfgang Schneewind (1966–1981) showed financial support in terms of growing the *dress/fashion* collection,²⁰¹ he had shown little interest in conceptually or critically developing the collection for public purposes or display (Vollgraaff, 1998:7–8). In 1982, when Wieke van Delen was appointed Textiles Curator, she found a "very large textiles collection, without a system²⁰² and without a purpose".²⁰³ The Cultural History Museum was "classified as an 'Own Affairs' museum, namely with 'white' interests [following the Tricameral Constitution of 1983], which also ruled that the South African Museum and National Gallery became 'General Affairs' museums, that is, institutions largely catering to 'all' races" (Davison, 2005:188). Davison argues that the museums participated in, and promoted these deliberate forms of inclusion and exclusion, entrenching racial difference and distance between 'affairs' that were termed 'own' or 'general' (ibid.). As Katherine Goodnow points out,

... far from being irrelevant to politics or aloof from the task of 'nation-building', [museums] had a particular role to play and particular contributions to make, and the nature of that role and those contributions calls for exploration (2006:166).

Van Delen's tenure as textile curator (1982–2014) reflects some of the contiguous political developments. During her twenty-two year career at the museum, van Delen catalogued the entire collection, published a few research-driven texts, led collection tours, and curated two fashion exhibitions – one near the beginning of her career, *En Vogue* (1987) and one at the end, *IsiShweshwe* (2013).²⁰⁴ Van Delen recalls how much of her time was occupied by the ongoing packing and unpacking of the collections, as the museum, and their storage, moved in accord with the many external political changes of these turbulent times. Beginning with the

195 Disparate collections of European goods or European tastes to the museum, as well as specialised collections of economic or cultural value, such as coins, knives, Japanese porcelain or Dutch Delft.

196 SACHM64/427 Hat, top

197 SAM3458

198 SACHM65/849–861

199 SACHM74/730

200 SACHM74/731

201 Museum funds were made available for purchase to 'fill the gaps' throughout the 1970s, evidenced for example in the purchase of high fashion items such as hot-pants and catsuits.

202 I discuss van Delen's role in the development of the classification system in Chapter Two.

203 There was no institutional support for the collection, van Delen, personal interview, 14/11/14.

204 I discuss these in detail in Chapter Three.

conservative position of the museum in the 1980s, van Delen navigated the collection²⁰⁵ through the political upheavals of the early 1990s, followed by the demise of apartheid, and into a long period of rethinking and re-organising the collection as part of the Iziko Museums merger in 1999. Although some small, and visible shifts were made – such as the purchase of traditional items in the 1990s – the collection largely ossified during this period of outward political transformation. The overarching, dominant ‘whiteness’ of the sartorial objects within the collection prevented any ‘real’ or meaningful post-apartheid engagement. This also meant that the efforts to treat the gaps were largely ineffective, and mostly ignored – conditions that I will explore later with regards the public ‘face’ of the collections, as exhibitions of *dress/fashion* in the final chapter.

A SUMMARY OF THE SARTORIAL IN THE CULTURAL HISTORY MUSEUM COLLECTION

Three observations arise from this interrogation of the origination and development of the sartorial at the Cultural History Museum. The first concerns the mode in which these objects were collected. Where ethnographic collections were developed through field trips, purchases and a focus on completing representative collections of objects, the Cultural History Museum almost exclusively depended on donations from the public, with fewer than ten percent of the collection comprising purchased items. The resultant sartorial archive of too many wedding dresses, christening gowns and club ties,²⁰⁶ and a dearth of nostalgic items deemed less collectible, such as school uniforms, plain t-shirts, or everyday kitchen aprons reflects the ‘popular’ construct of a sartorial heritage embedded within the eurocentric, socio-cultural norms of the day.

The second observation of this study contributes to the flow of ‘valued’ sartorial items from donor into museum collections. Framed within a broader understanding of what cultural history museums wanted, and therefore may have collected, are the South African political ideological dispositions that were racially explicit. The result, evident in the collections, is the unanimous ‘whiteness’ of donors, and thereby, the unanimous ‘whiteness’ of the provenance of the sartorial collection.

My third observation points to the politically conservative (and thereby, largely sartorially conservative) nature of the collection, which reflects the museum’s somewhat awkward relationship towards *dress/fashion* objects, with ‘fashion’ deemed capricious, disruptive and provocative, particularly throughout the politically-repressive, South African sixties, seventies and eighties. This is seen too in relation to the dearth of *dress/fashion* exhibitions at the Cultural History Museum during its forty-year existence. My research showed that there were no punk fashions, no cross-cultural dress items, no local designer collections, an extremely, minimal inclusion of nominally labelled ‘traditional’ items, and no Levi jeans, dungarees nor tracksuit pants in the collection at the time of the merger. Instead the collection reflected the conservative, homogenous, middle-class and heteronormative ‘whiteness’ that was built into the very foundations of the museum. This resulted in the notable tensions impeding the re-integration efforts to merge this collection with the indigenous *dress/fashion* objects found in the National Gallery and South African Museum. One final study of the development of sartorial objects in the National Gallery collection completes this chapter.

THE MAKING OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY COLLECTION

In third interrogation of a museum that holds a considerable collection of sartorial objects in this study, I explore the development of the National Gallery’s collection of *dress/fashion* objects. The role of museums in the construction and dissemination of notions of South African culture, heritage and the arts changed dramatically as a result of the country’s first democratic elections on 27 April 1994. The country, equipped with a new flag and new national anthem, and an entirely new conception of South African nationhood would need to

205 Van Delen, personal interview, 22/12/17.

206 Van Delen, personal interview, 14/11/14.

“revise not only South African history,²⁰⁷ but also rethink the definition and representation of these histories in museums and art galleries” (Barben, 2015:39). The revision, and reconstruction of ‘lost’ histories thus required an urgent and “dramatic transformation of the underlying assumptions” of questions of history, representation, art and identity (Barben, 2015:41). As Peter Vergo argued in his call for a ‘new museology’,

... the very act of collecting has a political or ideological or aesthetic dimension, which cannot be overlooked. According to what criteria are works of art judged to be beautiful, or even historically significant? (1989:2)

From an initial bequest of forty-five paintings presented in 1871 by Thomas Butterworth Bayley, the National Gallery’s fine arts collection grew to include paintings, sculptures and prints solely by European artists via donations or funds donated to acquire the artworks. By 1895 the South African Gallery Act was promulgated declaring “the small but already significant collection [of about one hundred paintings], assembled by the citizens of Cape Town, to be the property of the Colonial Government” (Goodnow, 2006:168–9).

Max Michaelis gifted the Michaelis Collection of world-renowned seventeenth century Netherlandish art to the National Gallery in 1914. Martin Wood elaborates on the value of such an enterprise of ‘distinction and refinement’ in *THE STUDIO: A Magazine of Fine and Applied Art*,

... the foundation of a gallery in Cape Town of paintings by old masters is an event of fine significance. Not only does it fulfill the desire of the Dominion of South Africa that the art of the race from which so many South Africans trace their descent should be represented in the country, but it admits South Africans to share in the greater treasures of Europe (1919:92).

These Eurocentric underpinnings of particular forms of refinement and taste were thus firmly established and entrenched by the time the gallery opened in the present custom-designed building on Government Avenue on 3 November 1930 (Goodnow, 2006:169). It would take another thirty years before their acquisitions focus would include any works by South African artists, and a further thirty years²⁰⁸ before the defining qualifiers of what was deemed ‘fine arts’ would be challenged with the inclusion and recognition of indigenous ‘crafts’ as art.

In stark contrast to the decidedly Eurocentric focus of the National Gallery in Cape Town in the 1930s, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMa) in New York held two exhibitions, *African Negro Sculpture* in 1935 and *Cubism and Abstract Art* in 1936, “in which ‘primitive’ and ‘pre-modern’ works were juxtaposed with modernist painting and sculpture, suggesting shared, timeless and universal qualities in the works shown together” (Bouquet, 2012:137). Five years later, another influential exhibition *Indian Art in the U.S.* opened at the MoMa in 1941, presenting Native American culture and ethnographic artefacts – that included ponchos and other objects of adornment – “in unprecedented ways for a modern art museum” (ibid.). Yet, by mid-century the desire to purchase, receive on loan or by donation and exhibit European masters and, to some degree, new work by European artists, still dominated the National Gallery’s aesthetic identity (Lilla, 2018:79). As a form of colonial belonging, these museal acts of representation retained the “function of celebrating the [dominant] taste and refinement of those who would dictated the conditions of culture (Hein, 2000:20).

Art historian Anna Tietze points to a shift in arts funding in the 1960s by the South African government – as the country’s economy stabilized, despite the progressive, political oppression of the time – that saw the purchase of the work of local artists, including the first work by a black South African artist in 1964 (2017:162). During his tenure, director John Paris (1949–1963) aimed to fill the gaps in the collection – he “pushed for the inclusion

207 There is little agreement as to what qualifies as “inclusive South Africa, rather than racially based, history, and little co-ordination to encourage an overarching philosophy of how to present the new South African history to the public” (Flynn & King, 2007:463)

208 The Acquisitions Policy was formalised in 1980, stating that art from the European founder countries, Africa and South Africa should be purchased (Martin, 1996, cited in Goodnow, 2006:166).

of indigenous art at the museum” (Lilla, 2018:78–79). Although local artworks by various South African artists were collected over the next two decades, it would take another twenty-five years before the museum would consider purchasing as art, objects of adornment for their newly established African Art Collection – objects long considered to be minor or lesser art forms, or in most cases, not art at all. However, the politics of aesthetics that created the divides between ‘art’ and ‘craft’, and ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ were largely upheld by the museum during these decades through various naming, labeling and display practices (Goodnow, 2006:166).

Tietze positions the National Gallery’s acquisitions of black art and ‘beadwork’²⁰⁹ in the late 1980s within a framework of more widespread “political activism, and broad cultural shifts towards postmodernism,” with exhibitions such as *Tributaries* (1985) and *The Neglected Tradition* (1988) influencing the gallery’s collection practices and policies (2017:169). Sashi Cooke points to the Draft Policy for Museums as a further influence on changing museum acquisition practices and preferences at the National Gallery (2009:164). The policy prescribed that,

... [museums] must participate in the rewriting of art history in South Africa, and curate exhibitions which will give a balanced and representative view of art activities in this country – past and present. An acquisition and exhibition policy of inclusivity rather than exclusivity should be pursued. This does not affect standards and ideas of excellence and quality rather, their revitalization (Draft Policy Manual, 1991:7, cited in Cooke, 2009:164–5).

THE SARTORIAL RECONFIGURED AS ART

National Gallery director Marilyn Martin (1990–2008) led the institution through these ‘transformation years’.²¹⁰ A key desire to question boundaries and to adopt an “open-ended and pluralistic approach”, led Martin to advocate for a policy of inclusivity that would impact the museal acquisitions, exhibitions and educational foci during her tenure.²¹¹ As curator Emma Bedford re-iterates,

... we [were] challenged about what [was] suitable and appropriate for the collection of a national art museum – issues about ‘art’ and ‘craft’ and ‘high’ and ‘low’ [were] often raised, as we continued to erode boundaries and eliminate categories which [had] invariably been imposed from outside our own borders (Bedford, 1997:18 cited in Tietze, 2017:168).

The more-than one hundred-year old National Gallery had until the 1990s neither collected nor exhibited beadwork as art (Tietze, 2017:160). The selection of beadwork from the Eastern Cape – home of incoming president, Nelson Mandela – and the elevation of these sartorial objects, from ethnography to fine arts, is worthy of some attention. The first ever, major exhibition of beadwork, presented at the National Gallery in 1993, *Ezakwantu: Beadwork from the Eastern Cape*, caused controversy both within the museum and beyond. As Goodnow notes, “the beadwork exhibition took the National Gallery’s “usual audience by surprise” (2006:172). Martin explains,

... beadwork fits uncomfortably into existing definitions of art and hierarchies appropriate to an art museum ... [and to achieve this exhibition] boundaries and terminologies had to be abandoned, assumptions had to be deconstructed and the very nature of representation had to be questioned (1993:7).

209 This includes the De-Bracey-Hopkins, Long, Ferraira and van Rooyen collections. I will discuss this change in detail below.

210 Martin, personal interview, 01/09/17.

211 Ibid.

Sandra Kloppe traces the reclassification of beadwork into art in her introductory essay to the exhibition's catalogue (2000:9–11). Kloppe suggests that the status of beadwork and its reclassification resulted from critical work by art historian, Nettleton, together with the Standard Bank Foundation's Collection of African Art committee that was appointed in 1979 (2000:9). Tietze suggests a further dimension, that these aesthetic considerations in the aftermath of the 1970s and following the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement, represented a new appreciation for acts of 'self fashioning' through contemporary beadwork, and "a revised politics of 'tradition', home and identity" (2017:10).

The National Gallery came under political pressure to be inclusive and, together with other public institutions, they were expected to play a part in contributing towards nation building (Goodnow, 2006:185). In this regard, the Department of Art, Culture, Science and Technology established a new policy document, the *White Paper on Arts, Culture, and Heritage* (1996), to unpack and critically reframe questions of identity, history and memory in the public domain. One of the recommendations – in line with the sentiments of the National Gallery's new Board of Trustees²¹² in the early 1990s – was for an expansion of its acquisition policy to include the purposeful collection of African art, particularly from South Africa, in order to address past omissions.²¹³ The gallery was particularly keen to establish an 'African Art' collection that acknowledged and celebrated a range of expressive cultures of the African continent, and particularly its southern regions. However, then curator of African Art Carol Kaufmann (1990–2016) explains that,

... the gallery had a lot of difficulty with the name [African Art] yet needed to create a department for works that were formerly excluded by the colonial or Western definition of a museum in South Africa (Kaufmann, 2001 cited in Goodnow, 2006:173).

CRAFTS AND AFRICAN ARTS

Calls for representation and inclusivity, however challenged the deeply entrenched binary of the 'tribal' and the 'modern' that continued to mark objects such as beadwork, as they entered the National Gallery's African Art collection. The notion of 'African art' conformed to "ethnographic definitions ... underpinned by the apartheid regime's policy of separate development" (Lilla, 2018:117). Hamilton and Leibhammer argue that the effects of ideas about 'tribe' marked out certain domains as,

... tribal and traditional and sharply distinguished from modernity ... denied a changing history and an archive, and endowed instead with timeless culture, attested to by other forms of evidence (2016:13–14).

The inclusion of traditional 'craft' not only emphasised cultural, racial and aesthetic differences but also reinforced the National Gallery's position in reserving the right to name certain forms of making "as art of a 'particular kind,' in this case, as African Art" (Lilla, 2018:117). Martin claims however, that the National Gallery, in their acquisition of art works for the African Art collection, would

... buy differently from, say ... a collection of ethnology. [Alluding to the South African Museum], they would buy a group ... the whole lot ... irrespective of aesthetic quality, because that is their collecting practice. When we buy, we look at the individual object. We look for quality (Martin, 2001 cited in Goodnow, 2006:171).

212 The new advisory Board of Trustees comprised of "academics, friends, and members of local council, some [of whom] were progressive and contributed to the circulation of ideas that were important within both artistic and political worlds." Martin, personal interview, 01/09/17.

213 According to the Draft Policy Manual (1991:10) in April 1988: "galleries across the country became officially free to acquire whatever work they chose ... under an autonomous Board of Trustees" (Cooke, 2009:147).

This distinction, that the National Gallery collected ‘aesthetically superior’ objects – signifying difference from the ethnographic objects purchased elsewhere – marked one of the collections’ characteristics. A second characteristic is that these objects of adornment were not considered as items of adornment; instead they responded to the institution’s “criteria of ‘art’ in every aspect,” asserted Martin.²¹⁴ In a sustained effort to remove the “ethnographic stigma, these objects were never identified as ‘fashion’ or ‘dress’ (ibid.)” In this regard, there was their embodied origins were chiefly denied.²¹⁵ A third characteristic of the sartorial objects that entered the National Gallery in the last three decades, is their limited reflection of an African sartorial aesthetic that is solely framed as ‘traditional,’ excluding rich cross-cultural, hybrid identities, or those of coloured, Indian, Asian, and even western origins from entering the collections.

Two recent exhibitions at the National Gallery sharply illustrate this narrow scope and focus of the gallery’s sartorial collection, *Ilifa Labantu Heritage of the People* (2005) and *Hidden Treasures: From our Permanent Collection of African Art* (2017).²¹⁶ The exhibitions each drew on the gallery’s African Art collection; both were staged in celebration of South Africa’s Heritage Month; and both were curated by Kaufmann. Each exhibition featured over one hundred pieces, reflecting the museum’s post-1994 ‘African Art’ purchases, and included indigenous ‘traditional’ South African *dress/fashion*, textiles from Ghana, beaded crowns and gold-weights from Nigeria, ‘Kuba’ ceremonial beadwork from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and a pair of repatriated, engraved ‘Nguni’ cattle horns ... together with headrests, baskets, drums, daggers, bowls, stools, masks and small bronze sculptures (Kaufmann, 2011b).²¹⁷ Art critic, Melvyn Minnaar describes *Hidden Treasures* as a show “that gently punts, without the politics, the importance of the continent’s great aesthetic traditions” (2017).

The blankets, ceremonial costume, garments from rural KwaZulu Natal, beadwork, staffs, and a goatskin bag included in *Ilifa Labantu* exhibition catalogue (Kaufmann, 2011b), appeared again twelve years later, in *Hidden Treasures*, showing a similarly, disparate collection of sartorial objects. This included ‘Ndebele’ artist, Esther Mahlangu’s painted court shoes,²¹⁸ two ‘Ndebele’ bridal beaded veils, and two ‘Ndebele’ marriage blankets.²¹⁹ Other sartorial objects on display, included a ‘woven cloth for a man,’²²⁰ two ceremonial back skirts or *beshu* for men,²²¹ and a diviners cloak.²²² A Nigerian men’s robe, a ‘Msinga’ ceremonial skirt,²²³ and a headdress,²²⁴ a ‘Xhosa’ skirt and apron,²²⁵ and a large ‘Xhosa’ cape²²⁶ and coordinating ‘Xhosa’ neck cascade²²⁷ were also included.

The two exhibitions, representing the aesthetic, expressive cultures of the National Gallery, evidence the absence of any western or other fashions, or hybrid sartorial objects. Despite the institution’s mandate for a contemporary, African inclusivity, the collection focus still remains narrow, and exclusively favours authentically, ‘traditional’ African artefacts. The National Gallery thus reiterates a largely, limited notion of which sartorial objects are considered collectable as art, and which are not. As a key figure in the South African fine arts field, the reputation follows that only ‘traditional’ African sartorial objects are deemed to be art.

214 Martin, personal interview, 01/09/17.

215 I explore the implications of this framing in detail in Chapter Three.

216 This exhibition followed an audit of the museum’s more than three thousand-piece African Art collection (Adriaanse, 2017).

217 National Gallery visit, 14/08/17.

218 ISANG2003/44

219 The Ndebele blankets are popular exhibition objects and their provenance and biographies would be a useful investigation. This exhibition showcased ISANG87/54 by an ‘unknown Ndebele artist’ and ISANG91/71 by Anna Vamuhle Skosana, while *Women’s Work* showed a blanket bought by the at the same time ISANG91/73.

220 ISANG97/65:5

221 ISANG91/211

222 ISANG2008/12

223 ISANG2004/26 by Makhosana-Zibula

224 ISANG2004/27 by Mahadika Zonde

225 90/68W:46 and 90/68W:18

226 90/68W:46 and 90/68W:18

227 ISANG94/8:1

A SUMMARY OF THE SARTORIAL IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY COLLECTION

I have identified three issues in this exploration of the sartorial objects in the National Gallery collection. Firstly, the re-classification of ethnographic objects of adornment to art in the late twentieth century, reframed a very specific set of sartorial objects as art, namely exquisitely-produced, authentic, 'traditional' African items of *dress/fashion*. The selective framing excludes many contemporary, and often hybrid, African sartorial items from entry. For example, the knitted cardigan by contemporary, African knitwear designer, Laduma Ngxokolo was redirected towards the new Social History Collections, regardless of capacity to answers to tenets of the National Gallery's collection criteria, with its exquisite workmanship, and its explicit references to 'Xhosa' beadwork traditions.²²⁸

The second observation concerns a certain 'violence' of the re-classification of *dress/fashion* as art. The sartorial objects collected as art are denied any reference to their wearer, or reference to both signs of and notions related to wearing. On occasion, an object is described as a marriage blanket, yet without naming the bride or groom, or even family or clan. Similarly, labels refer to items as worn by 'maidens' or 'boys'. The double disavowal of both the body, and the name of the wearer, denies the possibility of their subjectivity within the archive.²²⁹

Thirdly, the isolation of the African Art collection from the rest of the institution's collections reproduces the marginalization that initially denied the objects entry into the canon, as well as its continued ahistoricisation. I am reminded of Mignolo's caution that it is not enough to change only the content of the conversation, but that it is necessary to rethink, and rework the broader terms of the conversation (2007:459). In this regard, is necessary to trouble the boundaries and stereotypes that still govern what is, and what is not, collected by the National Gallery.

228 Van Delen, personal interview, 22/12/17.

229 The complete disembodiment is reiterated in the display tropes favoured by art institutions, that largely present items of *dress/fashion* as flattened wall hangings or in horizontal cases. I return to this in relation to sartorial representation in art exhibitions in Chapter Three.

Sartorial Readings One

A TROUSER-LED INTERROGATION OF THE THREE COLLECTIONS

Close readings of several trousers selected from the collections serve as a strategy to cross-cut and critique the complex and colonially-tainted Iziko Museums collections. The readings of the selected pants serve as a means to reflect on the very disparate conditions and dispositions in the collections laid out above. These collections present and perpetuate an uneven portrayal of South African sartorial histories, particularly in terms of the politics of personhood, identity, and agency. The historical overviews above contextualise the ideological, political and disciplinary influences on the compositions of each of the collections. The readings that follow illuminate the skewed nature of these collections, and in particular, the biased and incomplete representations of a range of South African sartorial histories.

I draw attention to the absent bodies in relation to the museums' sartorial artefacts to consider the identity politics of their owners or wearers, drawing on Entwistle's extended discussion of the interdependent and complex relationship between *dress/fashion* and identity, where "dress is the means by which identities are marked out and sustained" (2000b:117). I furthermore draw attention to the various colonial and apartheid conditions that continue to mark the objects since they entered the museums, and the impact of the epistemic violence of musealisation that is noticeably different across the three disciplines governing the collections in this study.

Through examining these effects, I consider what forms of personhood are remembered, how this knowledge is stored and shared, and, which identities (and subjectivities) are forgotten or denied altogether. I interrogate these objects in ways that,

... demand an attempt to understand the conditions and circumstances of the preservation of material as, and the exclusion of material from, the record, as well as [drawing] attention to the relations of power underpinning such inclusions and exclusions, ... [and] the particular processes by which the record was produced and subsequently shaped, both before its entry into the archive, and increasingly as part of the archival record (Hamilton, 2002:9).

Via the in-depth surveys above, of both shared and separate developments of the each of the three museal collections, I have shown primarily how the disparate collection practices, dispositions and disciplines distinguished, and continue to distinguish, black sartorial identities – as pre-modern, rural, cultural and tribal – from white sartorial representation – as historic, largely urban, and related to change. The three collections furthermore bear witness to socially, ideologically and materially divided pasts that continue to haunt the collections in Iziko Museums' present integration efforts.

Before I interrogate, compare, critique and trouble the three collections, I offer a brief summary of the scope and defining characteristics of the three collections. The South African Museum holds around fifteen thousand objects of adornment, three-quarters of which however are beadwork items. The collection follows a strict 'tribal' taxonomy, with each item allocated an ethnic identity as part of its primary classification. The collection is furthermore framed as largely timeless and unchanging; only occasionally, are these objects are 'dated' using very broad temporal categories, such as pre-industrial, twentieth century, or mid-century. Lastly, there is no record by name of a single wearer across the entire collection.

In contrast, the Cultural History Museum, which has over twenty-five thousand objects, has almost half the collection allocated to specific wearers by name. All those identified in the collection are white South Africans, mostly middle- to upper class, and largely unremarkable (no celebrities, no presidents, and very few known sport-stars, authors, activists or artists). In addition to the overriding representation of 'whiteness' in the collection, is the inherent colonial and apartheid stain in terms of the scope of the objects, which largely reflect

colonial histories, including wars, memorial events and political activities, as well as apartheid-related heritage narratives.

The National Gallery has the smallest collection of sartorial objects, totaling only three thousand items in the African Art collection; two-thirds of which is beadwork. The balance of this collection includes a few items of dress, together with an array of woodcarvings, wall hangings, headrests, pipes, accessories and amulets. The sartorial objects in this collection are strictly 'African', 'traditional' and 'authentic', with a focus on exemplary craftsmanship and detail. Neither contemporary objects of African origin nor any Western objects, feature in this collection.

My research has made evident the nature and extent of the dominant, and distinct, sartorial narratives prevailing across the three museum collections, exposing the marginalisation and exclusion of certain sartorial narratives that are witnessed as lacunae. I have drawn attention to the ways in which identity politics are key to any serious engagement with the sartorial collections in museums, and that in the South African context these objects are clearly raced.

In the seven 'readings' of the pants and their records that follow, I cross-cut this historical research in an effort to consider issues of representation, identification, expression and embodiment, as well as to notions of nostalgia, loss and belonging *via* the objects. This approach facilitates several possibilities in terms of exploring and imagining new biographies through the *dress/fashion* objects, and new narratives for forgotten sartorial stories.

UNFAIRLY GENDERED CONSTRUCTS IN THE COLLECTIONS

Two pairs of rare 1940s, tailored women's trousers entered the Cultural History Museum collection in 1996. Worn by Mrs Spooner's mother, the pair of dark, navy blue, wide-legged women's trousers made in coarse cotton²³⁰ shows signs of wear with scuff marks at the waistband, stains on the legs and a tear at the hem (see Figure 15). The trousers entered the collection as a donation from Mrs. Spooner, born 1939, who donated a wide selection of fashion-conscious dresses, trouser suits, skirts and accessories, from her own and her mother's wardrobes.²³¹

Of the fourteen pairs of women's trousers – out of a total of about one hundred pairs of trousers from the Cultural History Museum collection – only two female wearers of trousers are identified by name. Mrs. Spooner is identified as the wearer of a 1970s piqué summer trouser suit,²³² and a 1970s wide-legged pair of slacks,²³³ and Mrs. Durrell is identified as the owner and wearer of two custom-designed, 1950s 'stoffis' worn in Davos.²³⁴ Although Mrs. Spooner donated a large number of items worn by her mother, which included the two South African tailored trousers from the 1940s (described above) and a pair of pale blue shorts from the 1950s,²³⁵ her mother's name is entirely excluded from the record, namely from the catalogue cards and accession registers, and in the correspondence.

An obvious bias in the collection records is that so few women wearers are remembered by name, via the pants in the collections. In contrast, of the one-hundred-and-twenty pairs of trousers in the Cultural History Museum collection, more than eighty of these belonged to men, largely in positions of military, judiciary or other offices of power, and at least half of these men are identified by name as the wearers, as well as by occupation. A survey of other items such as dresses in the same collection show a similar pattern, that although the

230 SACHM96/399. The second pair is SACHM96/381.

231 See letter of thanks from then curator, van Delen, July 1996, Donations File 1995-1999.

232 SACHM96/392

233 SACHM96/400

234 SACHM78/105 and SACHM78/106. The term 'stoffis' could have been a colloquial, Afrikaans term for 'stovepipes' as very narrow pants, sometimes with a stirrup strap under the foot.

235 SACHM96/401



Figure 15. SACHM96/399: Trousler Hem Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

donor is mostly named, it is often clear that the donor was not the wearer, and mostly these female were not named.²³⁶ Conversely, when items donated by women were menswear, the names of the wearers were almost always supplied. Reflecting on the relatively shallow, underdeveloped and even ‘muted’ representation of women in museum collections, Helen Coxall argues that, “the roles of men [in relation to museum objects] are, in contrast, relatively deep, highly developed and fully pronounced” (1999:126).

A second denial of the female presence in the archive is witnessed via the same 1940s trousers of Mrs Spooner’s mother (described above). The trousers, manufactured by South African manufacturers Rex Trueform, carry a printed garment label which boasts a crest and hand-drawn, head-and-shoulders image of a women wearing a large hat, and a text proclaiming the trousers to be ‘Man-tailored by Rex Trueform’ (see Figure 16). Trousers were still largely perceived to be unacceptable for women in the 1940s. The insertion of a male maker in the manufacture of women’s trousers, perhaps suggested a more superior quality product through their being ‘tailored by men’.

Activist architect, Ilze Wolff however argues that, the extremely low wages of clothing industry employment in the Western Cape resulted in an almost “exclusively female, Coloured labour force” (2014:105). The first Rex Trueform factory opened in Salt River in Cape Town in 1938, and spatially, it perpetuated a “particular kind of modernity, one entangled with constructions of race, class and gender” (Wolff, 2014:9).²³⁷ The disavowal of the labour of Coloured seamstresses in the social history of Cape Town by the inside label in their own work, portrays the extent of their ‘invisibilising’ both in the world, and in the archive.

Another gendered construct is made evident via the selected lens of trousers across the collections. It relates

²³⁶ Even when then curator van Delen, donated a pair of Woolworths jeans, SACHM99/279, it is unclear whether she had been the wearer. Van Delen’s intention to donate a ‘jeans’ specimen to the collection was not intended to remember the wearer, but rather to fill a gap in the collection.

²³⁷ Wolff describes the architecture of the iconic Rex Trueform building as ‘invisibilising’ the coloured workers through structuring spaces such as “separate entrances and racially segregated restrooms” (2014:105).



Figure 16. SACHM96/399: Trouser Label Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

to the notion of ‘making’ and the identification of the maker. Integral to the notion of fine arts, is the artist, craftsperson or maker of the object, and as such, a key feature in art collections (such as at the National Gallery), is that the name of the maker is largely included.²³⁸ A closer inspection of this however shows that although this is true for artworks deemed ‘art’ by, and within the canon, recent exhibitions at the National Gallery still exhibit objects from their African Art collection with labels that state ‘Maker: Unknown’. Equally, the South African Museum acquisition records almost unanimously also exclude the names of makers of ethnographic objects.²³⁹ As Nettleton points out,

... individual makers have been excluded from the history of the production and marketing of African arts because anonymity has always served as a sign of the authenticity of African artistic endeavors, and, ultimately, of their continued difference from those of Europe (2010:57).

The notion of making and particularly the notion of making by women, however is a primary concern in relation to *dress/fashion* objects across the collections in this study, whether beadwork, christening gowns, or everyday wear. At least one-third of the Cultural History Museum’s collection, and almost the entire South African Museum collection of sartorial artefacts is ‘hand- or home-made’, yet there is no reference to this fashion practice of home sewing or hand-tailoring by women. Mrs. Spooner donated a homemade pair of 1950s shorts worn by her mother to the Cultural History Museum collection.²⁴⁰ The records however do not indicate whether her mother made them, or her mother’s mother, or whether a dressmaker was commissioned to make them. The identity of the female maker was considered irrelevant in the archival record, as the act of home sewing, as much as the home-sewn/hand-made object was deemed insignificant and without creative or critical value. This

²³⁸ Historically this was predominantly male painters, sculptors, photographers, collected at institutions such as the National Gallery

²³⁹ Of the nine pairs of trousers of the South African Museum only one maker is named and another inferred. I discuss this in detail in the following analysis.

²⁴⁰ SACHM96/401

is diametrically opposed to the predominantly male makers, as artists, in the realm of fine arts.

RACIAL MARGINALISATION IN THE COLLECTIONS

From the almost one-hundred-and-twenty pair of trousers across the three collections, each of these could be assigned a seller, dealer or donor, maker and/or wearer. This could result in a maximum total of about four hundred individual names. A more conservative, average of would be about one hundred individual names. Yet, there are only three people of colour identified by name. There are no names of wearers, two of makers and one of a seller. All three names relate to the nine pairs of trousers identified in the ethnographic collection of the South African Museum. In contrast, in relation to these same nine pairs of trousers, there are seven mentions of white men, and one white woman named. The Cultural History Museum collection records do not include a single mention of a person of colour; instead almost fifty white men are named, and forty white women are identified in relation to approximately one hundred pairs of trousers in their collection.

The persons of colour named in the records of the South African Museum are as follows. A beaded, repurposed, lined, black pair of pants was sold by Nosiseko Mfa²⁴¹ to beadwork collector Stephen Long in 1992. An additional note on the catalogue card, points to two other items also sold by Mfa to Long, that the museum purchased.²⁴² Long's time spent in the area, collecting and negotiating and regularly returning meant that he developed relationships over time, and this may have resulted in individuals like Mfa acting as negotiators and 'collectors' in the field.²⁴³ Mfa may also have been the maker, yet Long could not confirm this.²⁴⁴

One of the makers named in the records in relation to the trousers found across the collections, is Phodiso Setshegele, identified as the maker of a pair of sheep (or goatskin) trousers, or *borokgwe*, from Bophuthatswana.²⁴⁵ Again, it is unclear from the records, whether Setshegele was only the maker, or also the wearer of the pants, unlike the Cultural History Museum records, which regularly identified, and distinguished between, makers, donors and wearers by name or by association (as in donor's uncle, mother, father). The National Gallery collection of sartorial objects shows a more regular inclusion of makers' names; however in this regard, there are no trousers to refer to for specific details.²⁴⁶

Purchased in 1994, the catalogue card bears a hand-written, pencil insert that fills in the name *No-one*, in the space provided stating that the pants were made by *No-one* Ntuku of the MaMiya clan.²⁴⁷ However, the pair of trousers shows evidence of alterations, as well as repairs and decorative beadwork in various styles, that may have all been completed by one single maker, or perhaps, this pair of pants, or *ibulukwe*, may have been adapted and changed over a number of years amongst different members of the MaMiya clan (see Figure 17).²⁴⁸

Upon closer inspection of these items in the collection, however, it became evident that further 'names' had entered the archive. A pair of store-bought khaki coloured trousers, cut-off mid-way, was decorated with beads and a number of 'Xhosa' first names in permanent ink, that included Zibuzele, Mtanaka and Mlanduli (see Figure 18).²⁴⁹ The inserted panel at the back included a further name Mphathi, this time beaded in black, white, red and turquoise blue beads (see Figure 17); more penned names on the legs included Mpathi, Bheqezi and Mtanaka (see Figure 19); and, the initials 'W' and 'B' were beaded on the front.

241 SAM14268

242 SAM14263 and SAM14267

243 Stephen Long, personal interview, 23/09/15.

244 Ibid.

245 SAM11425

246 About one-third of the objects in the African Arts collection have makers' names.

247 Whether this meant that the individual's name may have been 'No-one' or the curator had been unsuccessful in acquiring the first name and filled this in as such 'No-One' is unclear.

248 I discuss this in some detail in the next close reading.

249 These would be first or second names of the clan name, MaMiya of the maker, Ntuku.



Figure 17. SAM14394: Alteration and Repair Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.



Figure 18. SAM14394: Penned Names Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

Thus, although these three names are included in the records, there is not one single entry, in relation to all the trousers across the three collections, that identifies a wearer of colour *by name*. In other words, no black, coloured and Indian men or women who *wore the trousers* are acknowledged in the records of these collections.²⁵⁰ Cultural historian, Siona O'Connell points to this lacuna in her project *MovieSnaps*. As a visual archive of multicultural, sartorial histories that have been largely excluded from official, or public records, such as museums, the photographs of a range of diverse and fashionable South Africans reflects a distinctly different narrative. This absence of black wearers in relation to museum collections is however not unique to the South African context. Neither the LACMA²⁵¹ nor many British museums collected clothing worn by people of the colour or the African diaspora. Curator, Tulloch confronted this absence in museums with a traveling exhibition called *Black British Style* (2004),²⁵² which showcased “the clothes and the bodies that wore them, looking at not only what was worn, but how”.²⁵³

Furthermore, the exclusive ‘whiteness’ of the Cultural History Museum collections manifests in a further repercussion of the perception of the race of the wearers, particularly in relation to new items bought at stores or at the Grand Parade.²⁵⁴ In these cases, the imagined wearers are invoked by the collective identities of all other individuals made present in the collection records, as white and fashionable, regardless of who may have purchased, and embodied the items. The countless photographs of fashionable people of colour, taken one street away from the Grand Parade (evidenced in the *MovieSnaps* project), contradict the museums’ narratives of a singular white modernity; instead the fashion in these photographs is witness to the existence of modern and equal, racially diverse subjects in an extremely, racially divided society.

NARRATIVES OF SELF-FASHIONING

Returning to the long, below-the-knee *ibulukwe* with the thick, uneven ink pen, handwritten names (see Figure 19), I argue that this re-purposing of the cheap, mass-produced pair of trousers, marks out new forms of identity, and makes bold claims to “contemporaneity and ownership” (de Greef, forthcoming). This cultural ‘over-writing’ of identities ‘performed’ on the garment’s surface, follows a graffiti trope of tagging, with five individual names claiming a shared space, a collective experience and perhaps, a mutual ownership through a singular sartorial item. The contemporary, literal use of text and the ‘traditional’, symbolic use of beaded patterns set up a dialectical tension between the past and the present, between tradition and modernity. This brings to mind Mbembe’s temporal entanglement of the postcolony that “encloses multiple *durées*, made up of discontinuities, reversals, inertias, and swings that overlay one another, interpenetrate one another, and envelope one another” (2001:14).

The beaded pairs of trousers in the collections present a further notion of marking or self-fashioning, where the stitching, cutting and beading of both formal trousers and light, khaki-coloured, mass-produced trousers²⁵⁵ re-purposes and re-crafts these objects, fashioning new and hybrid cultural identities through the expressive transformation of the objects. I propose that these objects bridge the handcrafted and machine stitched, and the past and the present, representing a mode of speaking to the politically oppressive contexts of their making. As large numbers of rural men began to seek work in the mines as migrant labourers, an increasingly complex sense of identity often played out through their sartorial choices. Sandra Klopper and Fiona Rankin-Smith describe how a hybrid “collaging of imported (European) and indigenous (African) forms of dress – of combining rural beadwork with symbols of urban leisure and sophistication, like shorts and tennis shoes – became increasingly common” (2010:530).

250 This may differ slightly if I looked at all the records. Yet, my premise is that the trousers reflect ‘patterns’ in the museal records, and if any wearers of colour are mentioned, they would be far less than the number of white wearers identified by name.

251 The Zootsuit ‘excitement’ in 2016 points to these same omissions

252 The V&A exhibition toured to five British venues in 2005–2006.

253 Tulloch, personal interview, 03/11/16.

254 SACHM71/139, SACHM72/774 and SACHM72/786 were all purchased at the Grand Parade.

255 As part of the public school uniform system in rural South Africa, these poor quality uniforms were part of the similarly compromised, Bantu Education offered during apartheid times.



Figure 19. SAM14394: Penned Names Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

I am interested in the ‘double storied-ness’ of these beaded trousers,²⁵⁶ which to my knowledge, no museums have as yet addressed. As a fashion historian, I recognise from the manufacture, cut, shape and details that some of the reworked trousers date from the early twentieth century, such as the black trousers of SAM14268. Loosened from the moorings of their earlier life, they re-entered a circulation network, and participated in a second historical timeline (see Figure 3). A reading of the beads and cotton thread used, and to some degree, the beadwork design, would temporally situate this beaded pair around the 1950s or 1960s – even perhaps into the 1970s as trade and access to newer materials in some areas in the rural apartheid ‘homelands’ was quite delayed.²⁵⁷ The ‘double-time’ of objects such as these, are not recorded in the ethnographic record of the South African Museum, which identifies objects by place or ‘tribe’, and very infrequently, by period or history.²⁵⁸

A common feature of the Cultural History Museum records however, is that there is almost always a historicity, or recognition of date or period, with regards clothing, such that distinctions are easily made between suits dating from the 1890s, the 1940s or the 1950s. By extension, the wearers of these objects are recorded as participating in or representing history, and invoked as capable of change, progress and modernity. In the case of ethnographic sartorial objects, their identification as geographically, not temporally bound, also marks their wearers as outside of time, and beyond ‘modernity’.

ABSENCE AND EMBODIMENT IN THE COLLECTIONS

A hand-stitched suede pair of pants purchased in 1981 by the South African Museum collection²⁵⁹ shows signs of wear and repair and carries the shape of the now absent body of the wearer into the archival space

256 Similarly, a series of workwear overalls and jackets in the collections – SAM14445 and SACHM94/685–688 – bear witness to these processes.

257 Long, personal interview, 23/09/15.

258 Periodisation in the ethnographic classification would be 19th century, or pre-colonial, and certainly not specific to a decade or a single year.

259 SAM12176



Figure 20. SAM12176: Wear, Tear and Repair Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

(see Figure 20). The softly buffed, warm, smooth texture of the rich brown leather resembles human skin, a kind of liminal body. Stallybrass identifies the contradictory aspects of sartorial materiality, as clothing's "ability to be permeated and transformed by maker and wearer alike, and its ability to endure over time ... [that when] a person is absent or dies, cloth[ing] can absorb his or her absent presence" (2012:70). The museum records give no details of the wearer or maker of this pair of trousers; yet the object invokes a corporeal and visceral presence of the absent wearer, an identity imagined or felt without naming.

South African artist, Nandipha Mntambo's cowhide sculptures, on exhibit at the Zeitz MOCAA Museum (2017), present a similar doubling of an uncanny, absent presence. The raw cowhide used to create the suspended female body-form sculptures alludes "to both a covering and skin ... the flesh and the outer shell used to clothe it have become intermingled ... [and] inseparable... evoking the push-pull between nature and culture, and the rational and irrational" (Corrigall, 2012). The materiality of the short, suede pants in the South African Museum collection summons a ghostly return of wearer, and of its wearing. Sartorial objects are thus the bearers of indexical traces, or as material cultures researcher, Ellen Sampson suggests, "markers of an absent presence – taxonomised, decontextualised and made static in collections, [museum artefacts are] ... at odds with the 'fleshy' and often messy practices of wearing clothes" (2017).

Of the nine pairs of beaded trousers in the South African Museum collection, two were described as torn or damaged, and two as being 'soiled', unlike in the Cultural History Museum collection records where only one suit out of almost one hundred trousers, is described as 'soiled'. Objects entering ethnographic collections were left in the condition they were acquired, "crumpled, soiled, or stained", resisting the urge of conservationists and curators to 'fix' or clean them up.²⁶⁰ The evidence of 'signs of wear' presents a paradox for the sartorial objects in ethnographic and art collections: the traces, or marks of embodiment signify or

²⁶⁰ Hosford, personal interview, 26/07/17.

witness originality, authenticity, and the passage of time,²⁶¹ yet these same marks are often the cause of their exclusion from exhibitions and public discourse. It is the fate of these “marked objects, carrying perhaps more bodily traces than would be desired, [that] they are rarely displayed and often languish hidden from view” (Sampson, 2017).

Cultural History Museum curator van Delen explains, “we actually, consciously, did as little as possible to the object before storing it,” however it was often the result of the preparation of the objects by the donors before they entered a museum such as the Cultural History Museum.²⁶² Van Delen continues,

... I can't honestly say that we purposely flattened, cleaned, pressed or repaired our 'new' objects before storing them. This is how we received them. I would say that it was the donors who [removed the traces] – we would generally receive a washed, ironed, darned, etc. item from the donor. What we did do was remove anything that might ultimately be detrimental to prolonging the life of the object.²⁶³

The degree to which these traces of embodiment, in the sartorial objects across the three museum collections is evident, ironically appears most noticeably in the collections where the wearer has been least recognised. Nettleton argues that sartorial objects, “through their close physical contact with individual bodies, are [akin to] parts of a person or persons” (2017:507). Similarly, Stallybrass and Jones posit that the relationship between the sartorial and the body is metonymic, where *dress/fashion* objects act as a “material memory, as a type of archive in itself,” representing the bodies of the now absent owners and wearers (2000: 200). An empty glove carries the imprint of the hand – the creases, folds and stains shaped by wearing – acting as a metonym for the individual wearer or owner's hand (ibid.). In the same way, the empty pairs of trousers in my research carry the imprint of their now-lost owners or wearers.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF SUBJECTIVITIES ACROSS THE COLLECTIONS

One of two pairs of beaded *ibulukwe* that entered the Cultural History Museums in 1994 is a pair of long shorts²⁶⁴ made in a deep green, mock melton. The beautifully crafted, pair of home-sewn shorts is decorated with rows of ornamental machine stitching in straight lines and triangular patterns at the legs and trimmed with white beads (see Figure 21). Beadwork along the garment's edges shows some indication of wear as some beadwork is unraveling. The catalogue card again denies any knowledge of wearer or maker.

As with mark making in fine arts, the meticulous attention to detail in the stitching, and the beaded pattern can be ‘read’. In this case, the selection of colour, materials, and beadwork patterning signal innovation and creativity – this is the only pair out of all six found across the collections that is home sewn and not store bought or secondhand. Unusual beadwork designs are featured, and this is the only occasion where orange beads are used together with the standard white, turquoise and red beads (see Figure 22). As Nettleton argues,

... while particular styles of beadwork came to be associated with specific ethnic groups, beadwork arts can (and must) also be seen as expressing personal taste or preference within, as well as connections to community, customs and history (2014b:342).

According to the criteria for collecting set out by the National Gallery – of purchasing objects of “great aesthetic value, and the best quality” (Martin, 2001 cited in Goodnow, 2006:171), this pair purchased in 1994 from

261 See Nettleton (2017:504–505). Nettleton makes a clear distinction between objects in collection that do show signs of use, and those “purpose-made for sale” to collectors and foreigners, which troubles their authenticity.

262 Van Delen, email correspondence, 17/12/17.

263 Ibid.

264 SACHM94/151



Figure 21. SACHM94/151: Hem Stitching Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

dealer Long by the Cultural History Museum to ‘fill the gaps,’ could have easily been acquired by the National Gallery as an exemplar of creativity, ingenuity, and authenticity.

Black South African women were “the producers of bead arts worn as items of dress by themselves and the men of their households, or by their suitors” (Nettleton, 2014b:342).²⁶⁵ These acts of stitching and beading, result in artefacts that bear witness to various cultural practices involving gendered, familial and social relations. The means by which familial relations such as these were remembered in the records of the Cultural History Museum differ dramatically from those of the ethnographic collection records at the South African Museums. Where beaded trousers reflect a range of relations (as pointed out by Nettleton above), there is no record of these relationships in the museum registers. In contrast almost one third of the Cultural History Museum records assign some form of relationship between objects, donors and their relatives, namely, worn by the donor’s mother, father, son or uncle.

Each of the six pairs of the *ibulukwe* found in the collections, represents a variation, yet are identified as common or typical to the area. All their wearers remain unidentified, and instead they are grouped together as cultural or ‘tribal’ stereotypes. In the case of the ‘Tsolo collection,’²⁶⁶ Nettleton highlights how “the object’s connection with the body is stretched to an imaginary or to a merely recalled relationship,” particularly when assigned a generic, or worse still an incorrect, ‘tribal’ identity (2013:44). These naming practices – of supplying a generic ‘body’ – underpin the collection of ‘specimens’ or items acquired by ethnographic museums. Each specimen is collected to “show a slight difference, illustrating the variety of species reduced to a few characteristic features ... [where] the conception of originality is not a matter of aesthetic effect, but an epistemological concept” (Thiemeyer, 2015:403).

²⁶⁵ Migrant labour practices resulted in largely women who were left behind in rural areas, where they were tasked with the upkeep of notions of culture, often expressed through the production of beadwork (Nettleton, 2014b:343).

²⁶⁶ Nettleton interrogates the violence of labelling and the identification of objects in the British Museum’s ‘Tsolo collection’ incorrectly assigned a ‘Zulu’ identity (2013).

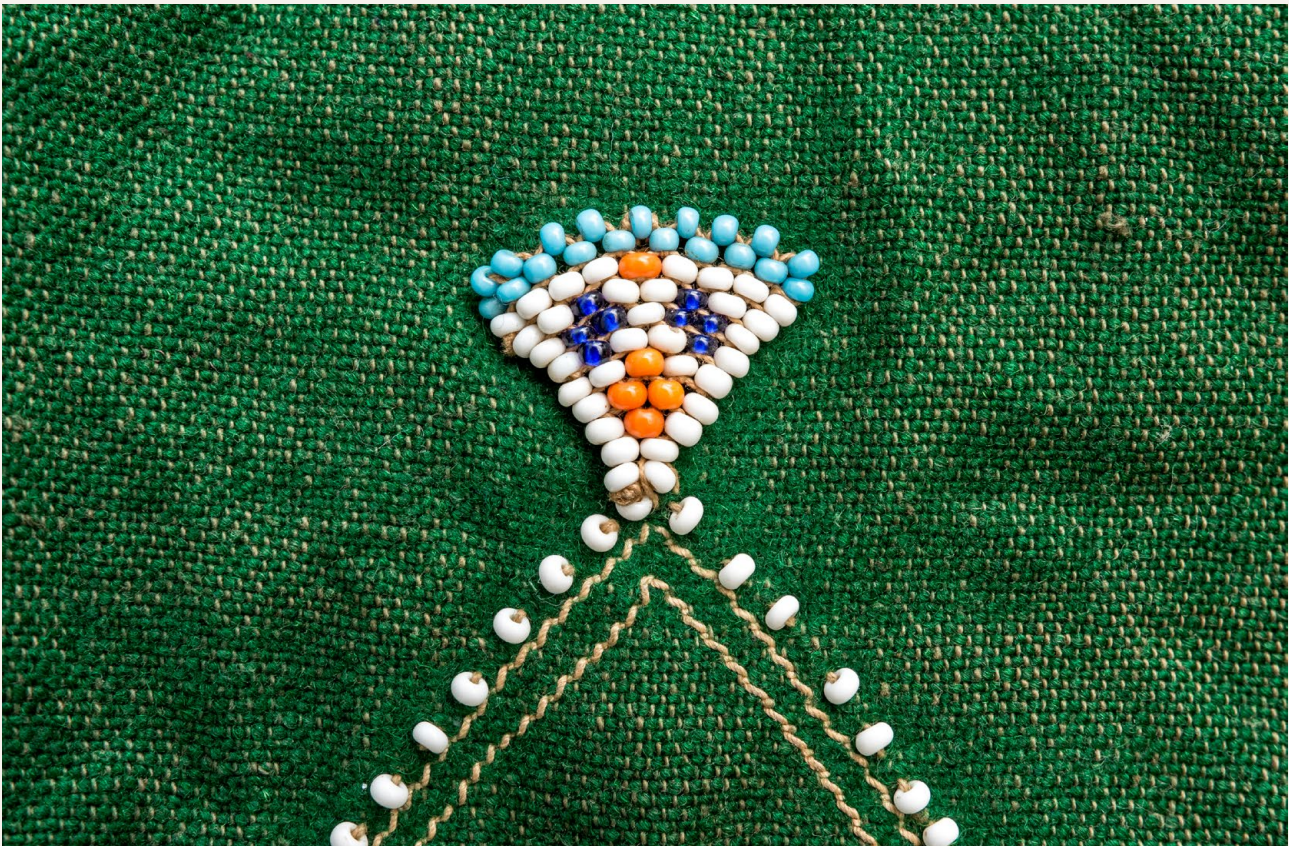


Figure 22. SACHM94/151: Orange Beads Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

Furthermore, the records of these ethnographically identified, beaded trouser specimens were largely assigned to a generic act, of being ‘worn by boys,’ regardless of the evident size range spanning from a young child²⁶⁷ to a young adult.²⁶⁸ The racist term ‘boy’ also carries a long history in both colonial and apartheid South Africa²⁶⁹ – black men of all ages were humiliatingly addressed as ‘boys’. Within a broader context of South African dress histories, this is also evident in the case of the ‘kitchen boy suit’ of the early twentieth century²⁷⁰ – a mode of dress that included knee-length shorts that continued well into the 1980s.

Although four of the six pairs of beaded *ibulukwe* clearly are cut-off trousers, they are all referred to as shorts, and not ‘cut-offs’ or pants.²⁷¹ This follows the same discriminatory infantilising as noted above, and reflects the politics of these practices as witnessed in the construction of the subordinate identities of black policemen in South Africa during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, effected through the wearing of light khaki shorts, unlike their white colleagues who wore blue trousers (Shear, 2003:115). The politics underpinning the construction of both identities and subjectivities in the museum records is reflected in these racist distinctions and terminologies within acquisition and collection practices that continue to haunt the present.

THE POLITICS OF SILENCE IN SARTORIAL MUSEUMIFICATION

Two pairs of beaded *ibulukwe* entered the Cultural History Museum in 1994. One of these, purchased from collector Long for R48,00²⁷² is a pair of ‘Fengu’ boy’s, black shorts with decorative, white beadwork.²⁷³ No

267 SAM14305

268 SAM14394

269 I discuss this in more detail in Chapter Two.

270 See Mxolisi Mchunu (2008). The outfit for black domestic employees formed part of a range of identification and control measures of African males entering the city for employment.

271 I discuss this in the analysis in Chapter Two.

272 According to Rossouw & Padayachee, in 1994, R50,00 would purchase a new ladies skirt and blouse, at R25,99 and R24,99; a new pair of men’s trousers and vest at R37,49 and R10,99; or, a bag of maize meal, coffee and sugar for a month (2008:241–242).

273 SACHM94/143 TRAD



Figure 23. SACHM94/143: Beadwork Threads Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

further details were offered. Two years earlier, the South African Museum had purchased from Long an almost identical pair of repurposed, beaded black 'shorts'. However, the accession card for SAM14268 is more detailed, and provides us with the following information:

A pair of pants, or *ibulukwe*; origin Xhosa from Ndevana. Store bought, lined black short pants, decorated back and front with white buttons, and white and turquoise beads. The pair of shorts with torn stitching and cloth was worn by boys. Sold by Nosiseko Mfa to collector Stephen Long. Purchased, August 1992, R48,00 – see also SAM14267 and 14263.²⁷⁴

Both pairs of beaded trousers – one whose seller is known, the other without trace of seller or place – are clearly worn, with stains and splitting seams. One pair has even 'lost' some decorative trims (see Figure 23). Considering their similarity, one would ask whether they were particular to an era, and to an area; whether their wearers or owners had danced together or known each other; and whether both pairs had both been sold to Long by Mfa?

Two issues arise in a comparison of these disparate records – firstly, the disciplinarily determined documents script different facts and different rememberings; secondly, the narratives, underpinned by multiple ideological and political hierarchies of value, position the objects, their agency and even their materialities within larger socio-political frameworks. Reading artefacts and their collection records, in particular ethnographic artefacts, suggests Nettleton,

... is illuminating not only in relation to the ways [these objects] have been ethnically pigeonholed, but also in terms of how assumptions about their authenticity and value as archival traces of 'traditional' practices have been normalised (2017:504).

²⁷⁴ The additional typed note possibly points to other items sold by Nosiseko Mfa.

In these sartorial readings I consider the intimate and personal narratives and subjectivities of the individual wearers, their lived experiences and their constructions of identity over time. When considering objects within larger questions of historical progress and events, Hamilton and Leibhammer similarly argue that material culture objects, when reframed as archival, offer productive ways for redressing gaps in the histories of the past (2016:413),

Bought by the two museums two years apart, the two pairs of beaded pants are linked via collector Long who bought extensively in the Eastern Cape over an extended period. Although Long could recall the occasion of purchasing specific items, he could not trace all; neither could he recall what had prompted him to purchase his first trousers almost fifteen years after he started collecting.²⁷⁵ Various factors also influenced what was made available to Long. In the context of the politically explosive late apartheid era, the prospect a white beadwork dealer traveling in the then-homelands of the Transkei and Ciskei, meant that Long was regularly met with levels of distrust that required patience and extended negotiations.²⁷⁶ Secondly, Long claims that much beadwork was, and still is, regarded as 'magic', and certain cultural practices would limit his access to particular artefacts.²⁷⁷ Thirdly, Long described how early examples of beadwork had largely been destroyed or hidden as the long-term effects of Christianity and colonialism had instilled a belief that beadwork represented 'backwardness' and 'primitiveness'.²⁷⁸ Beadwork items, made and worn, were also often,

... passed down from one generation to another, were unraveled and restrung or [like these examples], have survived as heritage items or as artworks in museums, generally without names of the makers or users, but always with an ethnic category attached (Nettleton, 2014b: 346).

Long recalls the resistance to selling beadwork, and furthermore to identifying the names of the owners or wearers when he purchased clothing or beaded items as these artefacts were closely related to their wearers' bodies and identities.²⁷⁹ Often the only way in which to 'erase' or 'interrupt' all access to both living and deceased individuals, would be via the destruction of the sartorial artefacts. Long explained that sometimes, "it went into the grave, into a pool or river, or it was unpicked and scattered, or it was unpicked and re-made." In this way, there could be no material or bodily trace²⁸⁰ or *insila* to reach or have access to the individual after death.²⁸¹

Two disparate impulses therefore may be at work in this particular acquisition outcome of the almost total absence of wearers' identities in terms of beadwork in museum collections globally.²⁸² The first would be disciplinary, where each ethnographic object collected in the field was acquired as a 'specimen' – an object with characteristic features that would place it in a specific species, family or class" (Thiemeyer, 2015:402). The relationship to the wearer was deemed irrelevant in this context of museum collections, making the absence of wearers' identities a common feature in the records of ethnographic museums globally.

The second impulse reflects Long's experience of collecting beadwork, namely the sellers' resistance and refusal to offer details or information, an act that may reflect a gendered and political counterpoint. Rodney Carter identifies these acts of resistance as,

275 Long, personal interview, 03/09/15.

276 Ibid.

277 Ibid.

278 Ibid.

279 Nettleton alludes to clothing or beadwork that becomes a 'detached' part of the body through having "absorbed aspects of the body, traces of its physical being" (2017:507).

280 Particularly in beadwork, traces of oils, sweat and scents of an individual linger. In certain cases the *insila* becomes the quality that makes it collectable – an auratic quality. In much the same way, Stallybrass describes how shoes and jackets through scent and shape invoke the deceased.

281 Long, personal interview, 03/09/15.

282 Nettleton describes this absence of wearer identities in contrast to the presence of collectors' identities found in relation to beadwork locally and internationally (2013:36–39).



Figure 24. SACHM82/406: Belt Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

... a dynamics of silence in the archives ... [where] silence can be a method used by the marginalised to deny the archives their records as a way to exercise their power over the powerful" (2006:215).

Carter argues that, "for those groups whose records [were] denied a place in the archives, alternative forms of transmission such as oral traditions, [were] adopted" (2006:222). These oral traditions ensured other notions of remembering, such as the *izithakazelo*,²⁸³ as archives of individuals, their subjectivities and their genealogies. The lacunae within museums thus reflect a dual, if not dialectical politics of silence.

WARDROBES OF MIDDLE-CLASS WHITENESS

Lelong Immelman, in a carefully selected donation of items of her father's wardrobe, presented a range of his workwear, casualwear and underwear²⁸⁴ to the Cultural History Museum in 1982.²⁸⁵ These items offer a glimpse into the life and style of the University of Cape Town's chief librarian (1940–1970), Mr. R.F.M. Immelman, a middle-class, middle-aged, white South African at a time of increasing political uncertainty and turmoil in the country. Although Immelman was seventy-seven years old when he died in 1982, the selection donated to the museum predominantly represented his working life; namely a light green, polyester safari suit with short-sleeved jacket and shorts,²⁸⁶ and jacket, shirts, ties, underpants and a well-worn, light khaki coloured pair of trousers with belt (see Figure 24).²⁸⁷

283 Hamilton explores the enormous, extensive, and diverse archive constituted by the *izithakazelo* of countless clans, sub-clans and sections of families, across south-east Africa, and questions what kind of archive *izithakazelo* constitute (2015).

284 The collection of twelve items, each item separately accessioned (T82/406–T82/417) also included a dressing gown, beach hat, jogging shorts and swimming pants.

285 Immelman died on 30 April 1982 (Die Burger, 05/04/82, p10).

286 SACHM82/407

287 SACHM82/406



Figure 25. SACHM96/441: Safari Suit Waistband Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

Costume historian Jill Morena traces a similar set of “items, low on the sartorial scale, of three undershirts and two pairs of socks” in the personal effects of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, physician, novelist, spiritualist, and creator of Sherlock Holmes (2014). The objects, in an otherwise familiar assemblage of conventional archival items (letters, photographs, drafts of works, etc.), are mostly considered absurd or strange, yet, claims Morena they present an intimate and deeply personal relationship to the man himself (ibid.).

Sartorial objects carry “accumulated life histories that can be researched and examined in order to understand more fully the different intellectual, social, economic, and political worlds of their owners” (Phillips, 2005:108). That the biographical capacities of *dress/fashion* are currently recognised in exhibitions is evident in *Gluck: Art and Identity* (2017) at the Brighton Museum and at the V&A Museum, in *Frida Kahlo: Making Herself Up* (2018), an exhibition that offers “a fresh perspective on Kahlo’s compelling life story through her most intimate personal belongings” (V&A, 2018).

The crafting of an identity through clothing, argues fashion theorist, Sophie Woodward, is a “process of construction through the materiality of clothing, [yet], it is also the moment at which the individual, the social, the ideal and the actual come together” (2007:30). The composite wardrobe of Immelman – collated by his daughter for the museum – allows for a reading of Immelman the man through his wardrobe. We are exposed to a range of sartorial decisions (colours, materials and styles) that reflect, not only the individual – Immelman – but also the social, political and even ideal tastes prevalent at the time.

The khaki coloured trousers and green polyester safari suit reflect a South African sartorial history worth interrogating.²⁸⁸ The safari suit became interwoven in the politically conservative, right wing Afrikaner identity in the 1960s and 1970s in South Africa – a look that was perpetuated by far-right groups and, an identity scripted

²⁸⁸ One beige polyester Safari Suit was accessioned in Museum Afrika, 87/688 (of about fifty men’s trousers/shorts in the collection). Museum Afrika, research visit, 25/11/14.

into popular television programmes well into the 1990s (Verwey & Quale 2010:561).²⁸⁹ However, not all men who wore these safari suits were apartheid stalwarts, as the suit was simultaneously considered the unofficial uniform of both English and Afrikaans, white civil servants and middle class office workers. Ironically, the safari suit also inspired French designer Yves Saint Laurent in the late 1960s, who “transformed the functional hunting outfit into townwear for women creating the ‘Safari Suit’ for his spring/summer 1968 collection”. Currently on exhibit at the MoMa’s *Items: Is Fashion Modern?* this Saint Laurent safari suit²⁹⁰ presents an entirely different narrative to Immelman’s safari suit, and a further two safari suits that entered the Cultural History Museum collection.

Fourteen years after Lelong Immelman donated her father’s clothes, Mrs. Spooner donated a vast collection of clothing from her own, and her parents’ wardrobes.²⁹¹ Included in this donation were two wash-and-wear, khaki-green, polycotton safari suits that belonged to Mrs. Spooner’s father (see Figure 25).²⁹² An analysis of the trousers in the collections, allowed me to interrogate the objects in terms of their lived, embodied, and in this case, familial contexts. As Sandra Weber and Claudia Mitchell contend, “clothing as objects of material culture, can act both as entry points for personal and private autobiography in relation to questions of identity, as well as entry points for understanding of the social components of identity” (2004:4).

A study of the safari suits in the Cultural History Museum collection allowed an investigation into the white, middle class suburb of Rondebosch, Cape Town in the 1960s and 1970s. Spooner was the only daughter of Margaret Catherine Forrester Murray (1909–1996) and Charles Alexander Robertson (1905 – 1977), a municipal employee of the Cape Town City Council for many years (May, n/d). Spooner was born in Cape Town in 1939, and married Theophilus William (Bill) Spooner, an architect in 1964.²⁹³ Mrs. Spooner and her mother both show, through the array of local and international designer cocktail, evening, mini, tennis, kaftan and tent dresses, as well as trousers, catsuits and pant-suits, that they were ‘in fashion’, stylish and perhaps even, adventurous dressers, as they mirrored the chronologies of style in the twentieth century.

Robertson’s safari suits however, present a sharp contrast to the evident fashionability of his wife and daughter. Had Spooner donated instead a leather jacket and pair of Levi jeans belonging to her father, a different view or perspective of the Rondebosch family may have been induced. Objects in museum collections “bear a representative or metaphysical relationship to the whole ... by being chosen away and lifted out of the embedding metonymic matrix” (Pearce, 1992:38).

The individual wardrobes of Spooner, her parents and Immelman offer us not only a reading of their individual characters and personal narratives, but also speak of multiple others of similar ages, similar temperaments, and similar social standing. As Daniel Miller and Woodward argue, the study of clothes in an individual’s wardrobe represents,

... the intersecting of fashion, public narratives and personal biography, where fashion is not just a system of rapidly changing styles that replace each other, but instead is seen in terms of longer-term shifts that intersect with an individual’s biographies (2012:18).

In other words, these sartorial assortments, when separated from the particular, can easily be appropriated elsewhere: the well-worn work trousers or pale khaki safari suits, invoke not only the memory of the men, Immelman and Robertson, but draw into focus, other men of that generation, via the construction of their fashioned bodies.

289 The image of apartheid was closely associated Afrikaners wearing safari suits. The movement known as the AWB (Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging) founded in 1973 was an extreme right-wing political group dedicated to secessionist Afrikaner nationalism, whose uniform of choice was the khaki safari suit.

290 Accession Number: 1984.598.96a–c Safari suit: 1970s Yves Saint Laurent.

291 SACHM96/167–230, SACHM96/360–500, and SACHM96/523–565.

292 SACHM96/441 and SACHM96/446.

293 Ibid.

FIVE DISRUPTIVE SARTORIAL REFLECTIONS

My close sartorial 'readings' of the pants and their records offer a number of key reflections. Firstly, via a pair of 1940s women's trousers that belonged to Mrs. Spooner's mother, I noted the representation and range of women in the collections, versus the scope and way in which men are represented, identified and remembered. Through Nosiseko Mfa, the seller and possibly maker of a pair of beaded trousers or *ibulukwe*, I showed the dearth of practices of identifying persons of colour by name in relation to the pants found in the collections. I explored the sartorial as a site of history, expression and personal narratives as the self-fashioning seen in the pair of 'tagged' and shredded pre-initiation beaded trousers. A pair of well worn, hand-stitched and mended, suede pants showed how traces of embodiment are evident and how garments act as metonymic objects. I argued for the notion of subjectivities and family relations in terms of *dress/fashion* objects in museums via a reading of a pair of homemade, green melton, beaded and decorated pants. In counterpoint to the disciplinary import in terms of defining objects, I explored the dynamics or politics of silence as framed in relation to objects worn on the body, which bear traces of the wearers of the beaded trousers. Lastly, I illustrated the capacity for representations of collective identities via the wardrobes of individuals, as seen through the safari suits in the collections.

Via my reading of the record of pants across the three museums' collections, I present five observations that interrogate the integration impasse prevailing in the Iziko Museums, as relating specifically to the histories, compositions, practices, and dispositions of the disparate collections. Firstly by reading the record of the trousers, I demonstrated how certain 'personhoods' are remembered, and how some are afforded more space, or more recognition than others. Although the compositions of the different collections reflect primarily the disciplinary concerns of the three museums, they also reflect the political ordering of persons or bodies within distinctly, segregated categories. The record of trousers illustrates how individuals are differentially excluded from the record – women are excluded mostly through not being named; people of colour are excluded both by not being named as well by the refusal of many of their sartorial artefacts; and the socially marginal (such as workers and artists) are excluded from the museum through not being named, as well as by the blanket dismissal of their sartorial objects and life narratives.

Secondly, I showed how the disciplines govern the collections, influencing the criteria in terms of what was collected, as well as who was remembered in relation to what was collected. There are distinct differences in terms of ascribing importance to the individuals related in various ways to the objects as they enter the museum. In the ethnographic museum, importance was ascribed to the dealers and collectors (i.e. by naming them), and on occasion the makers, whereas in art museums the emphasis, although not consistently, was on the naming of the makers. However, in the case of the Cultural History Museum the importance was ascribed to the original owner and/or wearer of the *dress/fashion* object that framed its provenance and successful entry into the collection, namely who wore it, and often, where they wore it.²⁹⁴

Thirdly, I turned to the objects in an attempt to 'identify' the bodies missing from the collection records. By reading their materiality, I identified a critical difference between the more visceral, and noticeable presence of the absent bodies within the ethnographic collections, than in the laundered and at times, pristine condition of the sartorial pieces in the cultural history collections. In addition, a number of items in this collection had never been worn. This trace or 'haunting' of the sartorial object by the absent body reflects the customary destruction of the deceased's beadwork that was aimed at erasing all trace of the wearer and thereby prevent access to the spirit of the departed. I suggest that this concern for the bodily trace or *insila* may have contributed to the absence of wearer's identities in ethnographic collections. The silenced identities of the wearers may have resulted from either disciplinary and archival practices or the considered acts of refusal and resistance in sharing personal traces of the wearers as the objects entered museum collections.

²⁹⁴ Recent developments in terms of collecting *dress/fashion* in institutions such as the V&A Museum and the Costume Institute however have prioritised the 'maker' at the cost of the owner or wearer – namely the designer or brand or specific object is what gives it the credibility to be deemed collectable. A counter-movement in fashion curation has begun that prioritises the wearer again, as seen with the planned exhibit of cross-dressing, Grayson Perry's dresses in 2018.

As my fourth observation, the close material study of the trousers in the collections allowed me to note the different traces of embodiment, as well as detect various traces of the making and marking of the objects. I used the hybrid, beaded trousers as an example of how the women who cut, beaded and re-fashioned the objects, are made present. By looking closely at their choice of beads, the types of stitching used, and the assortment of trims applied, I argue that these sartorial objects not only represent an item worn at particular occasions by specific individuals, but that these objects as hybrid artefacts, speak to multiple modes of being in the world – both tribal and contemporary, both rural and urban, both made and worn,²⁹⁵ as an archive of the lives of women and men engaged in tangible ways of fashioning their realities, rituals and identities. The contemporary, literal and symbolic use of text, pattern or beadwork in these hybrid garments blurs the artificial boundaries between the past and the present, between tradition and modernity, between Western and African.

Finally, in reading garments as archives of collective identities, I elaborated on the capacity of sets of sartorial objects to invoke certain ‘types’ of individuals. The ethnographic museum approach that supports the collection of ‘specimens’ (various versions of the same) illustrates how in the case of *dress/fashion* collections, a group characteristic can be invoked, and a particular ‘wearer’ is loosely determined in terms of class, gender and sexuality. Often in South African museums, this extends to race too. *Dress/fashion* artefacts, when separated from the particular, can easily be appropriated elsewhere: a pair of jogging shorts or swimming trunks that once belonged to Immelman, invoke not only the memory of the man who owned and wore them, in this case the librarian, but draw into the archive, other men of that generation and disposition, via the shared constructions of their fashioned, social selves.

295 See Nettleton (2014b).

CHAPTER TWO:

ORDERING THE SARTORIAL IN THE MUSEUMS

The fundamental codes of a culture – those governing its language, its schemas of perception, its exchanges, its techniques, its values, the hierarchy of its practices – establish for every man, from the very first, the empirical orders with which he will be dealing with and within which he will be at home (Foucault, 1989:xxii).

Museum theorist Gordon Fyfe posits that museums are agencies of classification, whereby the processes of museumification produces certain classes or groups of objects set in relation to other groups according to certain selected, distinguishing characteristics (1996:212). The ideologies or ideas underpinning what determines these organising ‘distinctions’ as one thing different to another, or as a series of relations amongst objects, is what Michel Foucault identified as being largely ‘epistemic’ in his seminal book, *The Order of Things* (1970). Foucault argued that the different sets of ideas that govern the way we come to structure certain systems of knowledge as recognisable and acceptable, while other organising structures are ‘unthinkable’, are a result of ‘epistemes’ that were, and are, particular to certain periods and times (Merquior, 1991:36). Foucault warns us of the “limitations of our own” systems of rationality with regards encyclopedic structures in his response to the “stark impossibility of thinking” in the way suggested by Jorge Luis Borges in his inventive and entirely different taxonomy of a fictive Chinese Encyclopedia (Foucault, 2005:xvi).

Four key areas of investigation form the focus of this chapter.²⁹⁶ The first area concerns the origins and developments of the various systems of classification and systematic organisation of the sartorial objects across the three museums. I briefly investigate the structural and ideological underpinnings of the established criteria within each the museums’ classification systems, represented via their catalogue cards, indexing systems and numerous registers. My aim is to identify both similarities and differences found in the distinct taxonomies for sartorial objects across the three collections.

My second key focus is the way in which sartorial objects in museum collections are mnemonic representatives of particularly raced, but also gendered, classed and cultured bodies. The classification of sartorial objects is therefore also a classification and ordering of particular personhoods. In a society such as South Africa, which has seen multiple, violent and unjust classifications and orderings of people, a study of the structures that underpinned the classifications of sartorial objects is imperative, as these colonial and apartheid inherited structures originally imposed upon the objects, continue to act upon these objects and related knowledge constructs in the museums, and through this perpetuation of divisive praxis, they impact upon contemporary identities and subjectivities.

The third key focus in this chapter concerns the concept of ‘language’ used across the three classification systems as measures of ethnicity or identity, as social semiotic systems, and as disciplinary constructs. These different language applications furthermore synthetically distinguish certain *dress/fashion* objects, practices and wearers from others across the three collections. I draw attention to the tensions set up between the disciplines in terms of the meaning systems of *dress/fashion* objects and their classification. I consider how ethnography chiefly locates sartorial meaning as a part of culture; costume history locates this meaning in the personal and socio-historical; and fine arts re-contextualises the sartorial as art. The need for museums to stabilise the meanings, if not functions of, sartorial objects, through words is complicated, if not futile, as *dress/fashion* itself functions as both a language of belonging and resistance (Entwhistle, 2000:114), and one that

²⁹⁶ In this chapter I follow the same three museums in the same order addressing their classification developments with regards to the effects of these on sartorial objects.

continually shifts in terms of both meaning and mode (Davis, 1992:10).

The fourth focus is the way in which the body is written into and out of the classification systems across the three museums. I consider both notions of identity scripted into the classificatory structures, such as age, gender and culture, as well as notions of the physical body as placement markers for the identification of the objects. In the early 1980s, the ICOM Costume working group chose to “consider garments in their relation to the human body, the one constant factor in all dress”, as their method for developing the most suitable terms for the cataloguing of costume (ICOM, n/d). I consider the various binaries, hierarchies and lacunae created via these ordering systems of objects in relation to bodies across the distinct taxonomies of the three museums.

However, the challenge of this thesis is not only in the understanding of the disciplinary discourses impacting upon the classificatory developments of the sartorial objects across various types of museums and their changes over time, but also, the impact of their epistemic underpinnings, and of the discourses at play during the different time periods of this study – the colonial ethnographic museum’s beginnings at the end of the nineteenth century, the early twentieth century fine art museum’s foundations, and the mid-century developments of the cultural history museum. As Macdonald points out, museums are both socially and historically situated; and as such “they inevitably bear the imprint of social relations beyond their walls” (1996:4).

DRESS/FASHION THINKING IN MUSEUMS

A series of talks by contemporary museums thinkers and practitioners hosted by Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, the *Dictionary of Now* (2015–2018), reflected on the capacity of words in museums to “organise complex fields of knowledge or depict and create realities” such as ‘time’, ‘truth, and ‘thing’ (HKW, n/d). In much the same way that ‘dictionaries’ are systems of meaning, situated within broader structures of language, museum classificatory structures are meaning systems within larger discursive fields. As part of the *Dictionary of Now*, museologist Sharon Macdonald joined anthropologist Arjun Appadurai and cultural sociologist Tony Bennett in a reflection on the mutability and instability of museum ‘things’ as objects that are largely embedded in classificatory sign systems. Yet, they argued that these ‘things’ exist in states of transition, as the contexts of their meanings continue to evolve and change over time (Mediathek, 2016). Macdonald considered how processes of ‘unlearning’ via counter-narratives told through the things themselves, are necessary in order to decipher the hegemonic geopolitics in museums and their organising structures, particularly in relation to questions of problematic aspects of cultural heritage (Contemporary And, 2016).

In a similar challenge to the construction of the meaning of things in museums, in this case in relation to sartorial objects, fashion curator, Judith Clark and psychoanalyst, Adam Phillips challenged the myth of an easy categorisation of *dress/fashion* objects, in an exhibition titled *The Concise Dictionary of Dress* held in 2010, at Blythe House, London. In the exhibition and adjoining catalogue, Clark and Phillips challenged the fixed classifications commonly applied to clothing through a series of installations placed throughout the repository store of the Victoria and Albert (V&A) Museum’s reserve collections.

Commissioned in collaboration with the museum, the exhibition confronted the museological desire to fix the meanings of fashion through classificatory systems, by “disrupting both the meanings applied and the methods used in that ‘fixing’ process” (Tseelon, 2012:18). The conceptual, even ironic installations acted as “visual interpretations of commonplace fashion adjectives, such as ‘measured’, ‘plain’, ‘light’ or ‘pretentious’ ... disrupting the [familiar] definitions” applied to fashion (ibid). *The Concise Dictionary of Dress* was far from concise, and the viewer was presented with “instability, uncertainty, ambiguity and a range of inexplicable and unconventional moments” throughout the exhibition (Tseelon, 2012:19–20). As Phillips points out in the catalogue,

... whether we are being persuaded or seduced – persuaded because of ourselves, or persuaded in spite of ourselves – a dictionary of language and the installation [of fashion] plays

off information against evocation (Clark & Phillips, 2010:9).

Semantic changes around meanings of *dress/fashion* objects affect museums not only in terms of their collection and classification, but also in terms of forms of display and public engagement, with regards to the understandings of notions of identity and belonging, or modernity and memory. As Tseelon warns, “meaning in relation to fashion must always be negotiated” (2012:14).

SARTORIAL CLASSIFICATIONS AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM

My first interactions as researcher with the material objects in the South African Museum were via their handwritten catalogue cards, some of which included small black-and-white photographs of the objects and additional, penciled notes. In my search for trousers in the museum’s collection, I was directed to the small catalogue cabinet in the first floor collections manager office. Each object’s duplicate cards facilitated two search options – firstly, one led by object name (such as adze, basket, bowl, or pants), and secondly, a search led by ‘ethnic’ divisions (such as Southern Nguni, Northern Nguni, Sotho or Venda). As objects largely excluded from the ‘tribal’ and ‘traditional’ collections in ethnographic museums, I was surprised and delighted to find nine pairs of trousers, on my first research visit.

Around one-hundred-and-fifty years before my research trip to the South African Museum and its cabinets and storerooms, a museological interest in the material cultures of ‘others’ developed in tandem with a range of colonial practices that would include the discipline of anthropology. The global development of anthropology was primarily steered by publications like the British Association for the Advancement of Science’s *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, first published as a guide in 1874. Anthropologist, Sarah Fee notes the importance placed on dress in anthropological research (2013:301). Detailed descriptions were often supplied for documenting dress in publications such as *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* with extensive guidelines and sub-questions which dealt with materials and constructions; dress’s social meanings; the role of dress in ritual; and the variations in dress according to ‘sex’, rank, ‘tribe’ and season (Fee, 2013:301).

Various revisions were made to the definitions and descriptions of anthropological practices, as outlined in the preface of the fifth edition of the *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*. It was noted that,

... together with more drastic re-arrangements on some scientific scheme of classification, it was important to [introduce] narrative forms that as far as possible substituted the old lists of ‘leading questions’ ... [as well as], to define technical terms and provide precise English nomenclature for the chief classes of processes and things which anthropologists have to describe (1929:vii–viii).

The revised guide offered a subtle revision of the notion of ‘fashion’ in relation to questions of ‘dress’ in anthropological research. The sub-question in the second edition of 1892 “Is there anything which corresponds with what we term ‘fashion’?” (cited in Fee, 2013:304) became, in the fifth edition published in 1929, “Is there anything which corresponds to “fashion” in clothing?” (1929:205). This nuanced adjustment re-inscribes the perceived distance, and even opposition, between the ‘dress’ or clothing of those studied, and the Western or modern practice of ‘fashion’ that the researchers would use as a comparative measure. This binary of tradition versus modernity, and dress versus fashion has remained central to the collecting, recording and classifying of sartorial practices and objects falling outside of the Western paradigm. As Rovine points out these are “broad concepts [that] are balanced against each other so that classification in one category means exclusion from the other” (2014:18).

The global circulation of ‘best practice’ guides such as the *Notes and Guides on Anthropology*, as authoritative voices in the field, influenced not only the development of the discipline of anthropology in South Africa, but

also the collecting practices of South African museums. Many of these museums, including the South African Museum were in regular contact with European, and particularly British museums. Hannah Turner points to similar developments at the turn of the century of the ways, in which ethnographic documentation in American museums began,

... [as] the development of collecting guides [were] published and distributed by the Smithsonian – [they were] possibly the first influences in the ways that material culture was organised prior to cataloguing (2015:662–3).

Turner further suggests that these guidelines, which were primarily “organised like other natural history collection guidelines for museums, [so as to] allow objects to be studied as valuable ‘specimens’ under the guise of good science” (2015:663), influenced that ways in which early material culture collections were structured and ‘scientifically’ organised. The record keeping about objects in anthropology departments in museums – for example descriptions of material and manufacture, function, geographic location, and style or form – originated with scientific field data collection, and as Turner shows, a focus on ‘standards’ for documentation underpinned by “an ethnographic objectivity” (2015:663). Turner argues that ‘ethnographic objectivity’ would in turn allow for the development of meanings that seemed to be stabilised within, and around, ethnographic collections and their ordering in museums (ibid.). As Foucault argued, this ‘ordering of things’ within the historical episteme of ‘objectivity’ and ‘scientific reason’ were determined by the discourses of the day, in other words, “by the fundamental codes of a culture – those governing its language, its schemas of perception, its exchanges, its techniques, its values, [and] the hierarchy of its practices” (2005:xvii).

CATALOGUING AND ETHNOLOGY

South African Museum anthropology curator, Klinghardt explained that, “unlike the cultural history museum, we use a cultural linguistic framework system that was Miss Shaw’s legacy in this department”.²⁹⁷ Shaw began working with the ethnographic material of the South African Museum in 1933 as a temporary ‘Assistant in Ethnology’, when she was tasked with extracting all the ethnographic material from the original *Antiquities Registers* started by Sclater in 1898 and collating this information into new Ethnography Registers (Summers, 1975:142). The purpose of this transfer of information was the eventual separation of the ethnographic material and its transfer to a new purpose-built Ethnology store in 1939 (ibid.). Shaw’s appointment as museum ethnologist in 1936²⁹⁸ meant that she was solely responsible for organising the ethnographic collection (which included storage, conservation, classification and collecting), as well as exhibiting the collection (in terms of design, content and logistics). In 1940 Shaw received two further responsibilities, namely managing the cultural history collection²⁹⁹ and the numismatics collections (ibid.).

Shaw’s growing interest in ‘modern’ cataloguing and storage systems for collections led to a European tour of ethnographic museums, visiting their collections and their exhibitions in 1938 (Grobler, 2005:54). Historian Elda Grobler acknowledges the impact of this research trip on Shaw’s implementation of a “comprehensive card catalogue system – where each object received its own card in addition to its entry in the register” (2005:55). The advantages of the card catalogue system is that cards could “be easily typed, arranged in different sequences, [and the system] induced museums to attempt multiple indexing of their collections” (Immelman, 1993:30–31). In Shaw’s effort to improve the cataloguing of ethnographic material at the South African Museum, she promoted a double indexing – by object name, and by ‘tribal’ identification – a system still in use

297 Klinghardt distinguishes the Cultural History Museum’s system based on international practices, from the system used at the South African, which he stressed is, “an authentic, and uniquely developed, classification system”. Klinghardt, personal interview, 09/03/16.

298 Shaw was the *only* museum ethnologist in South Africa for twenty-five years (Summers, 1975:143).

299 Shaw’s focus on material culture meant she was also tasked with cultural history objects of Western origin, which in 1960s were moved to the new Cultural History Museum.

today, as well as in many other South African museums (Grobler, 2005:55).³⁰⁰

In 1939, in a context separate from but simultaneous to Shaw, Hermia Oliver³⁰¹ from the Africana Museum in Johannesburg traveled to museums across Great Britain and Europe to examine “the current methods in museum techniques and display” (Byala, 2013:118). Oliver compiled a report that would come to influence display and classification practices at the Africana Museum (now Museum Africa), as well as further influence, South African museum theory and practices (Byala and Wanless, 2016:270). Calling for a more rational and neutral system, Oliver proposed that the Africana Museum adopt the Dewey Decimal System³⁰² as, “it is unnecessary for museum authorities to try to work out their own classifications, since the expert classifications, used in libraries are at hand” (Byala, 2013:119). Oliver failed to recognise the bias of power and judgment present in all classification systems, argues museum historian, Sara Byala, as the Dewey Decimal System, endorsed by Oliver for the Africana Museum as a democratic and modern system, was built on “divergent notions of history and tradition [with] ... an organising rationale that relied on binary thought”(2003:119).

In a letter dated 23 August 1940, in what seems to be ongoing, professional correspondence about museum practices, and classification processes and challenges, Shaw confronts Oliver in the opening paragraph of a three page, hand-written letter (reproduced in full colour), with a challenge, “it is rather amusing that you condemn object classification as being rigid, whereas I had chosen it as being the least rigid of all the alternatives!” (Byala & Wanless, 2016:568–570). These comments are followed by an invitation “please do not think you must be ‘tentative’ in any suggestions you wish to make about my suggestions” (ibid.). Shaw points to further differences in their understanding and application of the terms ‘subject’ favoured by Oliver, and ‘object’ favoured by Shaw, as suggested in response to the list in question where Shaw exclaims, it is “moreover compiled specially for you and your subjects, and had nothing whatever to do with me and my objects!” (ibid.). Byala and Ann Wanless also draw attention to the different ‘tribal’ classifications schemes for ethnographic collections, used by Shaw and Oliver, evident in their different classification, and use of ‘Zulu’ (Byala and Wanless, 2016:565).

However divergent Shaw and Oliver may have been in their desire to organise the ‘objects’ in their collections, these acts of organising information systematically and scientifically were part of larger impulses in the development of museum collection management practices internationally. The control of objects in museums required ways in which to organise, classify and catalogue a diverse range of artefacts. The desire to list, structure and order the knowledge of the world was central to the evolution of museums in the twentieth century, underpinning relationships of nationhood with power, politics, culture and history. Pioneers such as Shaw and Oliver, engaging with the organisation of ethnographic collections in their museums, were influenced by broader discourses, both locally and globally, as well as by the internal knowledge structures of academic discourses in related fields, such as anthropology, linguistics and science.

Despite the efforts of Shaw, Oliver and others to identify, organise and catalogue objects in South African museum collections, the Du Toit Report of 1949 found that “few museums, if any had a complete inventory for all the objects in their collection” (Grobler, 2005:58). The report, led by Dr. P. J. du Toit in 1948, resulted from a government commissioned inquiry of state-aided institutions including South African museums, art galleries and zoological gardens (ibid.). Grobler expands on the findings of the report, which stated that,

... the Commission was of the opinion that every piece should be documented as completely as possible with accession number and provenance; [and] that every state-aided museum and gallery should compile catalogues of its study and display collections for distribution (2005:58).

300 Curator and fashion historian, Daphne Strutt, first at the Africana Museum in Johannesburg, and later at the Old House Museum in Durban, similarly emphasised the “necessity of an index and a proper classification system so that there is no difficulty in separating the various items and putting them in their proper place in a museum” (Grobler, 2005:130).

301 Oliver was employed as a typist to the Afrikaner Museum’s founder and director John Gaspard Gubbins (Byala, 2013:118).

302 The Dewey Decimal System, first developed in the United States in the late nineteenth century as a proprietary library classification system, and evolved into a knowledge organisation tool broadly structured around ten main knowledge classes.

As the outcome of considerable study of “the routine needs of a museum ethnographic department, and of anxiety over the very backward state of our records of the material culture of the native people of South Africa,” Shaw had produced, *A system for cataloguing ethnographic material in museums*, by 1958 (Shaw, 1958:iii). The museum publication included instructions on cataloguing, object terminology, a table of South African ‘tribes’, some general information, a short bibliography, and an additional section for Afrikaans translations (Shaw, 1958). It also contained, an appeal to

... all South African museums, which have in their collections objects of South African ethnography, however few they may be ... [to] adopt this system of cataloguing, in order that we may have a uniform system throughout the country and that we may through it be enabled to build up a proper picture of South African native material culture (underline in original, Shaw, 1958:iii).

The original *Object Terminology* list in Shaw’s guide (of approximately three hundred items from Adze to Yoke-pin) included clothing (1958:3–10). These were predominantly Western-style clothes, Western-influenced clothing or imported artefacts, such as ‘Cloak – whether it be a properly made cloak or a blanket’, ‘Blouse – woman’s upper garment European style’, and ‘Skirt – for women only; whatever its length, and whether it goes right round the body for its whole length or is tied round the waist and hangs down at the back’ (1958:3–10). No trousers or pants are listed (a point I will return later). However, a second field is provided in the publication, namely *Object Categories*, that included ‘Personal: Clothing, Ornaments, and Accessories’ divided into ‘Men – belt, cap, cloak, hat, loin-cloth, penis-sheath, sandal, shoe, girdle’; ‘Women – apron, belt, baby-sling, breast-cloth, cap, cloak, doek, frock, girdle, hat, sandal, shoe, skirt’; and ‘Special – bandolier, costume, mask’ (1958:11). The final organising principle offered by Shaw in this cataloguing guide is the extensive, linguistically structured *Classification of South African Tribes* across four sub-categories, namely ‘Division’, ‘Sub-division’, ‘Group’, and ‘Tribe’ (1958:13–16).

This classificatory system created for museums with ethnographic collections operated as ways of controlling the various artefacts that entered their collections. In the case of sartorial artefacts, the classification informed the understanding of the objects, their position in relation to other worldly goods, and the (largely absent) role or identity of the owner and/or wearer. In this regard, classificatory practices can, and often do, enact an epistemological violence “inflicted upon the objects and on the knowledge realms from which the objects were extracted” (Turner, 2015:36). In her study of American museums, Turner points out how indigenous taxonomies remained outside of the classification systems developed by museums, “just as they [indigenous peoples] were when their objects were first collected” (2015:36). Turner argues that, as the documentation required by museums to establish scientific reliability was implemented to “functionally organise the collection of objects, [it] also represented the epistemological tendencies that situated the knowledge of indigenous peoples outside of the official record” (2015:34).

Foucault clearly illustrates and argues that discourse and its application in knowledge production and reproduction is violent (2005:xxii). In the processes of ethnographic classification, largely unchanged since its mid-century inception in the South African Museum, sartorial objects that entered the museum’s collection were, and still are, positioned firstly within a meaning structure informed by ethnicity, and secondly, within Western, largely colonial sartorial understandings of the body, adornment and clothing practices. These constructs of gendered, social, temporal or cultural identities inscribed onto the objects in their classification in the ethnographic museum, continue to disavow the possibilities for indigenous articulations, alternative genealogies, material ambiguities, or contemporary shifts in the meanings of and/or use for diverse sartorial objects over time.

Instead, notions of tradition and type are largely perpetuated through museum classificatory constructs,³⁰³

303 I show how this is also perpetuated through distinctive exhibition tropes used by museums in their display of *dress/fashion* in Chapter Three.

as well as in both historic and more recent publications, such as Berg's *Encyclopedia of World Dress: Africa* (2010). South African art historian, Gary van Wyk both supports and troubles these 'tribalist' associations in his essay in the *Encyclopedia of World Dress: Africa*, titled 'Nguni, Zulu, and Xhosa Dress and Beadwork,' as he describes how,

... among Zulu and Xhosa speakers, each regional and sub-ethnic style is identifiable by the conventional form and/or texture of the beaded object, by its palette, and often by distinctive motifs ... [yet] these categories of clothing worn and the patterns and colours of beadwork indexing ethnic and regional differences ... are not [always] fixed and rigid, as people were often uprooted (2010:514–515).

FRAMING INDIGENEITY AND THE SARTORIAL OBJECT

In 1972, the first of four parts of Shaw's encyclopedic, joint research project (begun in 1946) with van Warmelo, documenting the material culture of one of the Southern African 'tribal' groups, was published, *The material culture of the Cape Nguni. Part 1: Settlement* (1972). This publication was followed by *Part 2: Technology* (1974), *Part 3: Subsistence* (1981), and *Part 4: Personal and General* (1988). Each publication included overviews of information, images and explanatory texts on items of material culture drawn from publications dating from sixteenth-century travelers' accounts to the work of more contemporary scholars, as well as original fieldwork research completed by Shaw and van Warmelo. Whilst there is a comprehensive section on clothing, costume, insignia and ornament in *Part 4: Personal and General* (1988:448–700), there are only two references to trousers, both from Hammond-Tooke. In the first, there is mention "of *iindlavini* who are nominally Christian and always wear trousers" (Hammond-Tooke, 1962:80 cited in Shaw, 1988:502); while in the second and earlier reference, the distinctive "*kwetha* practice before seclusion, of wearing brief shorts and vests and goatskin anklets with bells [that] advertises the intention to enter initiation," is described (Hammond-Tooke, 1953:206 cited in Shaw, 1988:578).

In addition, although Shaw and van Warmelo compiled an extensively researched and comprehensive list of vernacular terms specific to both the material and sartorial practices of the Cape 'Nguni,' *ibulukwe*³⁰⁴ do not feature, albeit that images as evidence of decorated pants, re-purposed trousers and the western influences on everyday fashion were familiar, recognised and widely circulated by the time of the publication of *Part 4: Personal and General* (1988). One brief paragraph on the impact of western and 'contemporary' trade in the area describes the western imported textiles and items such as shweshwe dresses; however Shaw and van Warmelo's concerns across all four publications, focus on the ways in which forms of western influence are "reducing the purity and differences amongst tribes/groups" (1988:558). This resistance to change and exchange with and through Western artefacts, would thus exclude objects deemed too modern from Shaw and van Warmelo's survey of the material culture of the Cape 'Nguni,' which was framed instead as singularly 'traditional', authentic, timeless and unchanging. Foucault questioned this problem of 'culture without historical time' in a critique of ethnology as that which "suspend[ed] the long chronological discourse ... [choosing] instead to reveal synchronological correlations in other cultural forms" (2005:411). Foucault asks what it would mean if ethnology,

... instead of defining itself as the study of societies without history, it were deliberately to seek ... [ways in which to] bring the relation of historicity into play (2005:414).

Despite contemporary critical reflection on the impact of 'tribal' classifications and their epistemological implications, the current classification system used in relation to the ethnographic collections³⁰⁵ still largely

304 As noted above, the term is used in the classification of the trousers in the catalogue records of the South African Museum relating specifically to objects from the 'Cape Nguni' or 'Xhosa' people of the Eastern Cape.

305 However no longer used for accessioning, which is now being completed as digital accessioning.

rely on Shaw's 'Regional and Cultural Classification System for Storage' and the 'Object Categories for Anthropology Collections'. Klinghardt describes the initiation, motivation and activation of changes to and within the structures set by Shaw almost sixty years earlier, as 'complicated'.³⁰⁶ In Klinghardt's words,

... [we] were always very reluctant to add new categories to Shaw's system because of the potential for confusion, though some categories were deliberately left broad and artefacts were fitted in as far as possible into the existing categories, but [we] did add new ones when there was an obvious need for them, or when they represented artefacts widespread in Africa. This was done in the run of work, but obviously we were all in agreement about what was needed (2017).

However, changes were made in the classification guides that involved the sartorial objects. The first change was the move of individual clothing items from the object categories list to a single entry object category: 'Clothing' that was divided into sixteen alphabetically listed sub-categories. There is no record of when, how or by whom new object terms such as 'Dress', 'Robe' and 'Pants' were added to the original list from 1958.³⁰⁷ A second change in this sub-category classification of clothing was the removal of gender distinctions in the listing of *dress/fashion* items, suggesting that where objects were gendered this would be obvious (such as breast cloth or penis-sheath). A further interpretation of this removal of gender extends the notion of invisibility of the owner and/or wearer of the objects – where personhood was not deemed necessary, and neither gender nor identity was seen as essential in determining the meaning, style or value of the object.

In contrast, all other items of 'adornment' were extracted from the list of objects and grouped instead as a new category: 'Ornaments', listed with six sub-categories. These sub-categories of ornaments are not listed alphabetically. Their listing was determined by their position on the (now absent) body from head to ankle.³⁰⁸ In this instance, the unnamed and missing body provides a vital structure in the taxonomy for the ordering of these decorative objects. This type of *dress/fashion* taxonomy in the anthropology collections (of, or relating to the body) reflected similar moves in the classification practices that were being considered by Western costume historians in the mid-1970s, as a means to 'scientifically arrange' and better manage their collections.³⁰⁹

That these structures perceived as scientific have endured, underpins the need for critical and transformational work, not only at the South African Museum, but also further afield. Examples of new ways of thinking about and with objects in ethnographic museums, include the groundbreaking work at the Tropenmuseum's Research Center for Material Culture in Amsterdam, which attempt to reposition, reframe, and rethink the "historical and contemporary meanings of our collections, the national and global histories of which they are a part, and the contemporary societal questions around issues of heritage, cultural identity and belonging that these objects raise" (RCMC, n/d). The Tropenmuseum's annual conference in 2017, titled *Reckoning with History: Colonial Pasts, Museum Futures, and Doing Justice in the Present*, responded to contemporary calls to "decolonise institutions, as pointed challenges to enduring structures, modes, and symbols of inequality and oppression that are still present in ethnographic museums". Projects such as these address the tensions between the ethnographic museum, its collections, the organising principles that govern these objects, and their associated literacies (namely, institutional and disciplinary languages and practices), versus the reclamation of meanings and the material objects themselves.

The development and underpinning ideologies of the classification system that was developed and adopted by the South African Museum in the late 1950s (just prior to the segregation of Western material culture goods

306 Klinghardt, email correspondence, 28/09/17.

307 These decisions were not bulleted in Minutes of Board Meetings, and Klinghardt could not identify these occasions either. Klinghardt, personal interview, 09/03/16.

308 All beadwork is categorised as 'ornament', unless a supporting textile 'garment' is identifiable, such as beaded apron, beaded cloak, or beaded trousers.

309 The best method of working with costume was to consider garments in their relation to the human body, "with the body being the one constant factor in all dress" (ICOM, n/d).

from the museum's holdings with the establishment of the Cultural History Museum in 1966), has resulted in particular structures that have sustained separate forms of personhood since, both within the museum, and beyond. Three observations result from this survey of classificatory developments at the South African Museum. Firstly, as ethnographic practices were indebted to scientific principles, the ordering and arranging of sartorial objects into a fixed and static taxonomy, runs counter to inherent qualities of *dress/fashion* as dynamic, individual, mutable and expressive (characteristics largely preserved for Western fashion, but arguably applicable to African fashion too).

Secondly, the effects of ideas about 'tribe' on collections in museums, (following Hamilton and Liebhammer, 2016:13), has meant that certain material culture objects have been distinguished from modernity and marked out as 'tribal'. This persistent classificatory distinction has far-reaching implications on contemporary understandings of South African sartoriality and its diverse and dynamic sartorial histories. In terms of the South African Museum and its collection, these classificatory structures determine the ongoing perception and practice that Western *dress/fashion* objects do not fit into ethnographic museum taxonomies, as well as ideas that African sartorial practices are 'ethnically' determined and divided, unchanging, and ahistorical.

These conditions lead to the third observation. Ethnographic, sartorial taxonomies largely disavow individual personhoods and agencies (in terms of makers, owners and wearers), instead they locate objects as regional or 'tribal' specimens. The subjective and individual narratives that relate to, or are expressed via clothing, (such as those speculated on above) are denied articulation in the ethnographic record.

SARTORIAL CLASSIFICATIONS AT THE CULTURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Between 1948, when the National Party came into power, and 1961, when South Africa was declared a Republic, the political and cultural processes, set into motion by the oppressive ideology of apartheid, necessitated a new set of supporting heritage narratives, presenting various museological challenges and changes. One notable outcome was the formation of new 'cultural history' museums, either as entirely new museums, or as cultural history collections that were split from natural history museums, to develop new and separate historical narratives in museums of their 'own'. A resolution, taken at the Historical Association of South Africa's annual congress in 1957, called for "the separation of cultural history museums across South Africa ... [because] of their neglect in historical museums – an injustice that has existed for too long" (Grobler, 2005:99). Davison recalls how a "large group of Afrikaner nationalists, who were very proud of their heritage, wanted in Cape Town the equivalent of a museum like the Africana Museum in Johannesburg" (Davison interview, in Goodnow et. al., 2006:61).

In 1952, as the South African government passed increasingly restrictive and oppressive laws, limiting access to urban areas, job opportunities and decent education for black South Africans, the Van Riebeeck Tercentenary national festival was proudly proclaiming a new yet very narrow, 'national' identity. Fairs and exhibitions were staged throughout South Africa, celebrating the supposed 'auspicious arrival' of "a Dutch East India Company official on a temporary assignment at an insignificant African outpost in 1652" (Kruger, 2004:182). The creation of Jan van Riebeeck as the "less than ideal founding figure of the nation," argues historian, Leslie Witz in his close reading of the 1952 Van Riebeeck Tercentenary, led to tensions resulting in boycotts of various events that coincided with the 'celebrations', as well as creating the impetus for the launch of the Defiance Campaign at the Grand Parade in Cape Town in 1952 (2003:56). The growing Afrikaner nationalism and the skewed, official attempts at history making prompted a rise in African nationalism and the beginnings of a 'counter-history' (Witz, 2003:255).

The institutional attempts to mould and represent white South African history in particular ways (presenting new narratives of white heritage and community) operated in sharp contrast to the capture of cultural identities

of black South Africans, as staged in the national history museums of the day such as the South African Museum and the Transvaal Museum. Grobler traced the collections management practices at the Transvaal Museum in her study of museum from 1913 to 1964 (2005). In 1953 Mrs. Kotie Roodt-Coetzee was appointed a professional officer for History at the Transvaal Museum (following her participation in the development of period rooms and her involvement in the Voortrekker Monument Museum) as part of the museum's attempt to include 'cultural history' in its collections and exhibitions "so as to record, and perpetuate for posterity, the cultural development of the country" (Grobler, 2005:91). The fact that this 'cultural development' meant European cultural development should be pointed out. The 'cultural' displays of black South Africans in the museums was not to indicate their contribution in creating the nation, yet displays of Afrikaner 'culture' would be used to underpin the Afrikaner's role in nation-building.

Roodt-Coetzee contributed to the creation of the National Cultural History and Open-Air Museum (which split from the Transvaal Museum in 1964), as well as the development of a new, cultural history museology in South Africa (Grobler, 2005:96). Museum historians and archivists across South Africa who had been involved in Afrikaner 'heritage' events,³¹⁰ such as the Van Riebeeck Tercentenary in 1952, and the Transvaal Museum's Pretoria Centenary in 1955, supported the break away of cultural history museums. These developments were furthered by the recommendations made in the Du Toit Report to "collect objects of the culture of white language groups in South Africa" (Grobler, 2005:110).

Rodehn reflects on similar developments at the Natal Museum that started to actively "accumulate material from the white community by the 1960s ... [creating opportunities] for both the museum and the public to participate in the construction of a seemingly collective white identity and heritage" (2011:282). At the South African Museum, records of minutes of Board Meetings between the mid-1950s and mid-1960s show the steady development of decisions that would eventually lead to the establishment of the separate Cultural History Museum. While cultural history departments were creating new 'Afrikaner' heritage identities and finding new sites for their development, the natural history departments together with anthropology and archaeology, remained rooted in the original colonial museums. Goodnow points to the ways in which this "very juxtaposition of natural and ethnographic collections portrayed the 'first people' as specimens, as primitive and therefore without complexity, as nomadic and moving with nature – unlike the colonisers who could occupy and 'domesticate' the land" (Goodnow et. al., 2006:53).

DEWEY DECIMAL SYSTEMS, MODERNITIES, COSTUME AND FASHION

Minutes in the South African Museum Report of October 1963 note the need for cataloguing the cultural history collection, with recommendations to use a new classification system, the Dewey Decimal system, that museum historian, Mrs. Paap was going to "study and copy" (1963:2–3). Roodt-Coetzee at the Transvaal Museum, and Oliver at the Africana Museum both developed museum practice manuals drawing on the Dewey Decimal system that included standard terms and vocabularies for their museums' classification systems. Oliver followed the Dewey Decimal system but noted how in the process of implementing it, the museum "frequently had to devise for [themselves] their own system of categories" (Byala & Wanless, 2016:570). In favouring the Dewey Decimal system, "Oliver brought into the museum the presumptions and prejudices found in the museums of Europe and embedded in the Dewey Decimal system ... that also fitted neatly with the political and academic paradigms of the day" (ibid.).

In a critique of the 'perversities in the organisation of knowledge' in libraries, Melissa Adler reveals how the Dewey Decimal System as an authorised classificatory mechanism "not only reflects and gives form to academic disciplines, but the categories actively produce, reproduce, and privilege certain subjects and disciplinary norms" (2017:2). Adler argues that cataloguing systems delimit and proscribe expressions of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and race, and posits that,

310 Afrikaners, as descendants of predominantly Dutch settlers, were the key stakeholders of the apartheid politics and represented both power and political oppression for much of the twentieth century.

... unmasking the political agendas underlying the organisation of subjects will open up possibilities for understanding how [libraries, museums and archives] shape the way that we do history and acquire and create knowledge, as well as ways that we can reconfigure library, history, and archival practices (2017:119).

Adler further argues,

... the arrangement of subjects in the library displays with remarkable precision, how scholars and librarians have viewed objects of study in relation not to one another but to the project of nation building. The histories of race, sexuality, class, and notions of normal and abnormal have been written into this classification on the basis of how they inform the history of the [nation] (2017:136).

In my own research for this thesis, I similarly struggled with the limits and terms of the classification of certain sets of knowledge in the Hiddingh Hall Library of the University of Cape Town. Following the Dewey Decimal system, 'Costume' falls in the category (390) of customs, etiquette and folklore. 'Fashion, history and contemporary' (391) is a category that includes costume and personal appearance; interdisciplinary works on costume, clothing, fashion associated with specific occasion, history and persons; and, costumes of various groups. A number of books that critically address African fashion are included here, for instance, Berg's *Encyclopedia of World Dress: Africa, Fashion Tribes, The Art of African Fashion*, and other academic texts. However, in my search for Rovine's *African Fashion, Global Style: Histories, Innovations and Ideas You Can Wear* (2014), I was directed to 'Decorative Arts' (740) with a category for 'Costume' (746) that includes fashion design, interdisciplinary works on clothing, and clothing construction. A select few other, contemporary African fashion books joined Rovine's book, suggesting that 'contemporary African fashion' remains an idea or concept outside of the rest of 'fashion'. These include Jacqueline Shaw's *Fashion Africa* (2011), *New African Fashion* (2011) by Helen Jennings, *Contemporary African Fashion* (2010) edited by Suzanne Gott and Kristyne Loughran, and a selection of other titles including *Fashion and Museums: Theory and Practice* (2014), *Visual Research Methods In Fashion*, and books on Coverlets, Macramé, and *100 Ideas that Changed Fashion*.

OTHER SYSTEMS FOR ORDERING FASHION

The Fashion System, first published in 1967 by literacy critic and semiotician, Roland Barthes has greatly influenced the reading of sartorial objects as 'texts,' opening up the possibilities of ordering fashion into linguistic structures. Using a scientific, semiotic approach, Barthes assessed a mid-1960s, European summer fashion narrative to derive, by induction, a system of relationships – or grammar – so as to order fashion and "to stop it from being so inherently subversive, diverse and in a state of flow" (Tseelon, 2012:18). The need to control meaning, so as to order the possibilities of fashion (as portrayed in popular media), encouraged Barthes to think about fashion 'differently' – via a determined, and carefully structured 'language of fashion'. However, I show in this thesis, that *dress/fashion* forms and meanings exist in unstable relations and classificatory practices that try to stabilise sartorial meanings and grammars, largely fail to accommodate embodied, and fashioned notions such as resistance, irony or ambiguity.

Barthes had initially considered dividing up the body "into more and more particular areas, and then group the genera concerning each area according to a dichotomous progression" (1990:104). However, he settled instead on an alphabetical classification, even if, in his words "it was considered to be the poor relation of richer classifications" (ibid.). His rationale was that if all modes of classification are equal, then "an alphabetical classification is an emancipated form, [as] the neutral is more difficult to institutionalise than the loaded" (ibid).

Of the sixty terms in Barthes's alphabetic list, one-third of these relate to parts of the garment (such as Sleeve, Armhole, Back and Front), and a further one-third is dedicated to accessories (including Belt, Gloves, Scarf and Stockings). The last one-third of the list includes design details (such as Colour, Material and Silhouette),

and twelve items of clothing: Apron, Blouse, Cape, Coat, Dress, Ensemble, Jacket, Pants,³¹¹ Petticoat, Skirt, Sweater, and Vest (1990:105–110). Two points in Barthes's classification are of interest to my research in the museum collections. Firstly, the genus 'Dress' in Barthes's list³¹² includes outerwear items that 'cover the torso' as well as 'Jumpsuits', which situates Mrs. Spooner's 'Trouser Suits' and the various 'Catsuits' in my research in this category of 'Dress.' They were filed under 'Dress' in the Cultural History Museum catalogue cabinets.

Despite his scientific effort, I draw attention to two of perhaps a number of omissions, as a reflection on the limits of 'any' classification. The first omission is not surprising, as the list is clearly drawn from women's fashion magazines. Although most items regarded as traditionally masculine are included in the list, such as jacket, coat, tie, and pants, there is no waistcoat or similarly fashioned object in Barthes's list. The second omission is more intriguing, as this reflects a selective exclusion or clear disavowal by Barthes from entry into the 'language of fashion'. Although girdles, bras and corsets³¹³ featured predominantly in the advertisements in women's fashion magazines of the 1960s, and thereby should have formed part of his corpus, the only 'underwear' that made Barthes's list were 'Stockings' and 'Petticoats'.

CLASSIFICATION AT THE CULTURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Although the Dewey Decimal System was recommended by the South African Museum Board in the 1960s, for the newly opened Cultural History Museum, it was never taken up. There was a significant time lag in the development of the new museum, with objects relating to the split from the South African Museum only being accessioned in the registers in the 1970s. Adopting and implementing a new classification system was not prioritised nor implemented, and it would take another fifteen years before van Delen was employed as textile curator in 1982. Van Delen recalls that there was "no real order in the collection and no systematic catalogue specific to the costume collection, even though Dr Eckert [her predecessor] had worked really hard at developing the collection".³¹⁴

Van Delen and Klinghardt each refer to the Chenhall System³¹⁵ as the classification system of the Cultural History Museum's sartorial collection. Robert G. Chenhall based his classification on functions performed by man, dividing the functions into broad categories, with the third category referring to personal artefacts, including clothing. My research shows that while the Chenhall hierarchy may be applied at the level of category classification,³¹⁶ the actual form, design and details of the classification cards of the Cultural History Museum follow instead, a rather different taxonomy.

The sample catalogue card A5, promoted and first published in the practical *Guide for Museum Documentation System* by the Museum Documentation Association (MDA)³¹⁷ in 1979, seems to be the template used by van Delen in the development of the Cultural History Museum's fashion classification system. The second edition of the *Guide for Museum Documentation System* (published in 1981) offered updated descriptions and guidelines for the accessioning of objects and the recording of their information, including media for 'costume' with claims that,

311 PANTS. *Pegged, jeans, pants (bell-bottomed, deck-), shorts* (Barthes, 1990:108).

312 DRESS: *Baby-doll, smock, jumpsuit, sheath, tank, dress (blazer-, blouse-, blouson-, shirtdress, chemise, sheath, coat-, sweater, pinafore, tunic-), overalls*. This genus is not an inclusive class; it shouldn't be surprising to find garments of quite different forms and functions, like the smock, the jumpsuit, and overalls, united here. (Dress is only the arbitrary name of a genus.) If there is affinity of substance among all these species, it occurs at the level of their extension and of their rank in the garment's thickness (Barthes, 1990:106).

313 See Elaine Benson and John Esten (1996) *Unmentionables: A Brief History of Underwear*.

314 Van Delen, personal interview, 14/11/14.

315 The Chenhall System, first published in 1978, is the nomenclature for classifying man-made objects devised by Robert G. Chenhall that is still used largely by Canadian and American museums.

316 Category 3 is 'Personal Artifacts', with three sub-categories, namely Adornment, Clothing with eight sub-classifications, and Personal Gear, also with eight sub-classifications.

317 In 1977, a group formed the Museum Documentation Association (MDA). A new general scheme of cataloguing developed by the MDA in the United Kingdom follows the recommendations of ICOM Costume within its own conventions and the list has been published as an appendix to the Association's Costume Cards: Instruction (1981:2nd edit.).

... the media for costume have been designed to conform both to the recommendations of the ICOM Costume Working Group and the MDS data standards. They are suitable for recording both dress and accessories. They incorporate the developing ICOM classification for dress (1981:18).

At a meeting in Paris in 1971, the International Committee for the Museums and Collections of Costume began to develop a 'Vocabulary of Basic Terms for Cataloguing Costume' with a working group who identified the complex, diverse and changing vocabularies of fashionable dress used in museums (ICOM, n/d). For instance, within a common language group, the word 'pants' in English and American English "were not the same" (Ibid.). Lists of basic terms were completed with corresponding, identifying sketches; for women this was circulated in 1978, men in 1980, and children in 1981.³¹⁸ The working committee felt it was necessary that,

... in the naming of garments, we worked always from the objects themselves and their relation to the body and not to any theory of classification which introduced other factors. The terms themselves and their grouping do not take account of special Function, but the naming has to be seen within the context of the list of basic information where function appears as a separate entry, following the name of the object. So the basic term for bathing or wedding dress alike is Dress (ibid.)

I posit here, that the influence of Barthes in the museological terrain of costume classification was two-fold. Firstly, it offered a 'scientific study' and by this means, lent a gravitas to the study, collection and classification of fashion in museums.³¹⁹ Secondly, as a fairly new field of study, costume historians and museum practitioners welcomed the notion of a theory of fashion beyond conspicuous consumption and class, at a time when fashion was being radically democratised and disrupted by youth and street cultures.

The Cultural History Museum's classification of its sartorial objects was divided into five major categories, namely womenswear, menswear, girls, boys and a fifth category of 'traditional' or TRAD. Each of these categories had numbered sub-categories pertaining to objects of Western fashion, namely dress, skirt, blouse, jacket, coat, pants, underwear, etc. for women and girls, and suits, jackets, pants, waistcoats, underwear, etc. for boys and men and boys. The TRAD category however had no sub-categories, and finding trousers in this category proved more difficult. Van Delen worked tirelessly to update the record of all the items in the collection with detailed catalogue cards, stored in the small cabinet in the Textile Store. These catalogue cards structured, and determined the information required with regards to each item, and included the following categories: class number, object, and accession number; donation, loan or purchase; name, address and phone number; date of acquisition and value; location in store; details of the material, colour, measurements, and date and place of origin; maker or artist; a condition report; and, a brief description. Unlike the catalogue cards of the ethnographic collection, the Cultural History Museum's classification cards required neither sketches nor photographs of the items. Van Delen recognised the failure of the museum's classification system to accommodate 'other' sartorial objects, such as hybrid, transgender or cross-culture items that did not fit into the classification system, which she "felt was very limiting. My intention was always to try sort this out, and the TRAD category that I never did get to!"³²⁰

The close study of the development of the classification system of the Cultural History Museum raised three observations. The first draws on dress history practices that underpin the classification of sartorial objects as 'costume', namely, the notion that these items cover the body and their classification is divided into categories

318 The system used at Museum Africa is based on "Lelong Immelman's renowned reference works for museums, with standard description terms and illustrated line drawings". Diana Wall, email correspondence, 20/11/14.

319 Conversely, this may have affected the way in which South African costume curators – almost exclusively women who had never studied fashion – may have been intimidated by this Barthes's theoretisation of fashion. In addition, there was little support in terms of development given to costume departments in South African museums.

320 Van Delen, personal interview, 22/12/17.

that follow their placement on, or relation to the body. Using the object's position on the body as the primary identification for classification, fragments the garment, and thus decontextualises it from an embodied, social and lived set of meanings.

Secondly, the obvious and persistent gender binary present in all costume catalogues, and more broadly in the discourse of *dress/fashion*, underpins the impossibility of thinking about the sartorial and its ordering beyond this binary. The classification categories of womenswear and menswear are determined not so much by the museums themselves and by committees such as the ICOM Costume committee, but by the inherent gender binary in and of fashion. These binary classifications largely 'refuse' the queer sartorial object, and in this way have disavowed the entry of their narratives (and objects) into the museum.³²¹ How would one categorise the stiletto shoes worn by queer, performance artist, Steven Cohen or the suits worn by early twentieth century transgender artist, Gluck? Would these be classified in the museum under 'Women's garments' or 'Men's garments' or 'Other'?

My third concern lies with the Cultural History Museum's classificatory standard that operates within the ambit of ICOM Costume's basic terms and vocabulary using names for objects with "terms applied to fashionable and unfashionable dress within the orbit of European style", perpetuating the segregation of European or western *dress/fashion* from 'other' *dress/fashion* practices (ICOM, n/d.). These sartorial objects were thus denied entry into these collections and largely redirected to museums of world culture, ethnography or folk museums. In response to this definitive framing of fashion as western, the Cultural History Museum's fifth category, TRAD would absorb items that did not fit comfortably within the specifics of the ICOM classification categories.³²² Each of these restrictions, operating within and through the taxonomy of the museum marked the objects in their entry into the collection, and more so, continue to determine their lives both within the museum, and broader contemporary contexts.

SARTORIAL CLASSIFICATIONS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY

The National Gallery, despite its efforts at inclusivity and diversity also created classificatory boundaries that excluded certain objects from their collection, just as the South African Museum and Cultural History Museum did, both adopting systems that would prevent particular objects from entering their respective collections. The classification of the sartorial objects in the National Gallery traces two incursions into what was predominantly a Eurocentric collection of paintings and sculptures. The first incursion saw the belated inclusion of black 'artists' into the gallery's collection, which would lead the way for a wider scope of what these artists 'made', including functional objects such as headrests, baskets and objects of adornment, mainly beadwork. The second incursion, well-evolved however not necessarily well-resolved in museums and art galleries internationally, is the entry of 'fashion' into the 'art' canon. I consider these two developments in relation to their classification at the National Gallery, and their ongoing challenges below.

In the late 1930s, when Shaw and Oliver traveled to Europe for the purpose of developing classificatory systems to organise their respective collections at the South African Museum and Africana Museum, across the Atlantic Ocean a range of events took place that would come to influence the collection, classification and display of another type of collection, namely of fashion in the art museum. In 1937, a temporary exhibition of dresses at the Rockefeller Centre in New York, introduced the concept of a newly designated Museum of Costume Art that would, within ten years merge with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, change its name to

321 I discuss projects and exhibitions that deal with these limitations in the reflections that follow.

322 Van Delen personal interview, 22/12/17.

the Costume Institute, and acquire its own building (Koda & Glasscock, 2014:22–23). The Costume Institute³²³ was primarily developed from a study collection with the early years built on strong creative and financial relationships, in response to the ‘aesthetic blackout’ of the World War II, which “resulted in mutual benefits for both the museum and the fashion designers and industries involved” (Koda & Glasscock, 2014:23).

While the Metropolitan Museum of Art welcomed the Costume institute’s historical and fashionable dress, the MoMa considered fashion with much greater skepticism and reserve, with an exhibition titled *Are Clothes Modern?* (1944). The exhibition, according to curator, architect and designer, Bernard Rudofsky was “in no sense a fashion show [but rather an attempt to] encourage creative thought about the problems of modern apparel” (Antonelli, 2016).

The question of fashion’s ‘modernity’ in a museum of ‘modern’ art is joined by a larger question that has kept ‘fashion’ out of art museums for much longer, namely “is fashion art?” In a MoMa press statement of 1944, Rudofsky pointed out, how “strange it is, that dress has been generally denied the status of art, when it is actually a most happy summation of aesthetic, philosophic and psychological components” (Rudofsky, 1944 cited in Antonelli, 2016). Despite Rudofsky’s efforts to consider fashion as a site for critical reflection, current MoMa curator, Paola Antonelli concedes that,

... the MoMa deliberately chose not to engage with fashion in its galleries or its repositories for more than sixty years, wary of those most anti-modern terms with which it is often derided: ephemeral, seasonal, faddish (2016).

The MoMa fashion exhibition, *Items: Is Fashion Modern?* (2017–18), the first since Rudofsky’s 1944 exhibition, is a clear nod to the erstwhile exhibition’s enduring influence. Antonelli evaded the art-fashion debate in her approach to the exhibition, claiming that the focus was ‘design’ rather than art, with the display of a selection of one-hundred-and-eleven items of fashion, considered by the museum to have significantly influenced history and society in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Antonelli, 2016). The display included designer-branded Levi 501s, Dr Martens Boots, and Yves Saint Laurent Safari Suits, together with everyday objects such as Coppertone sunscreen, and culturally rich artefacts, such as kippahs, keffiyehs and kimonos. This move, to include everyday sartorial items and culturally-laden fashion objects in an art museum such as the MoMa in the twenty-first century, reflects two broad developments – the first aims to move beyond the designer-driven exhibition focus of many art museums’ contemporary engagements with fashion such as the blockbuster shows of Alexander McQueen, Commes des Garçons, or new archival museums such as YSL and Louis Vuitton, while, the second development interrogates the colonial classificatory boundaries of art, inherent in most art museums that reflect a politics of class, aesthetics and power.

Held at the Australian National University in Canberra, Australia in 2016, the *Fashioning Museums* conference invited museum practitioners, fashion curators and key academics to explore and discuss the tensions, opportunities and experiences underpinning the overlapping fields of fashion in the museum,³²⁴ asking *what is fashion doing for museums?* With a focus on the ‘agentic’ capacity of fashion to ‘do’ what new museology calls for, namely renewed public participation via new audiences, re-contextualised archives and shared meaning-making, Riegels Melchior cautioned that not all ‘fashion museology’ guarantees greater access and inclusivity, or more opportunities for redress and remediation (2014:2–3).

In her close reading of the National Gallery, art historian Anna Tietze considers how the above debates, of fine

323 Although the original criteria for collecting and exhibiting at the Costume Institute originally spanned all continents, centuries and class, the more “recent remit has focused on only the best examples of historical and contemporary Western high fashion” (Scaturro & Fung 2016:159). By 2017 the Costume Institute has more than 35,000 costumes and accessories, representing five continents and seven centuries of fashionable dress, regional costumes, and accessories for men, women, and children, from the fifteenth century to the present (The Met, n/d.).

324 Museums included in presentations ranged from larger national museums to small house museums, as well as ethnographic museums and art museums.

art versus fashion or design, were supplemented by a second, closely related, yet dissimilar, fine art versus craft or folk art debate in South African art institutions, particularly noticeable in the latter half of the twentieth century (2017:8–9). The question of *dress/fashion* in South African art museums straddles both concerns. With only occasional appearances at the National Gallery, such as the 2010 Mercedes Benz Awards, the former argument ‘is fashion art?’ has been far less prioritised than the latter, ‘is craft art?’ which since the late 1980s has made a sustained appearance albeit still within the problematic, culturally determined framework of ‘African Art’. However, the status of the African craft object remains contested as the classificatory systems in art museums continue to operate on binary tensions such as craft versus art, European versus other, amateur versus professional, and folk versus fine art (Tietze, 2017:9–10).

The pioneering influence of director, Paris in the early 1950s included the development of a classification policy that would incorporate South African artists and craftsmen through the establishment of,

... a new, five-way historical classification of South African art production: namely, Africana; pioneers; groups and schools; individual artists; and, prehistoric, primitive and indigenous arts, [that he hoped] would facilitate the acquisition of work to fill long outstanding gaps in the collection (Tietze, 2017:106).

The inclusion of ‘indigenous arts’ as art however would not materialise as Paris had envisaged; instead the National Party’s apartheid ideologies would dominate. This determined the focus on aesthetics of particular cultural timbres and their selected appreciation, ensuring a segregation of cultural production within national institutions such as galleries and museums, well into the 1980s.

AFRICAN ART OR ADORNMENT

The entry of indigenous arts including objects of African adornment, into the canon of South African art began with Ricky Burnett’s groundbreaking *Tributaries* exhibition held in the warehouse building that would become home to Museum Africa, Johannesburg in 1985.³²⁵ This exhibition, held at the height of political unrest in South Africa and in the context of draconian efforts to suppress all forms of political resistance and counter-cultural expression, initiated the development of the category of art that was to become known as ‘contemporary South African art’ (Cooke, 2009:27).³²⁶ The exhibition was unique, writes art historian Shashi Cooke, “in that more than half of the art on show was by black artists from different socio-economic areas, and it was welcomed ... [as an] affirmation that the art of black South Africans was worthy of more than ethnographic interest and display” (2009:27).

However, Johannesburg galleries, such as the Gertrude Posel Gallery and the Johannesburg Art Gallery, and individuals including Nettleton³²⁷ and Luan Nel had already, since the late 1970s begun to develop their collections to include the work of local artists, beadworkers, crafters, sculptors and painters (Blanckenberg, 2012:22). In this way, they began to define “what was culturally significant and what types of material culture were deemed collectable and valuable”, influencing the canon of South African art (Blanckenberg, 2012:23).³²⁸

National Gallery curator Emma Bedford (1982–2007) asserts that the choice of bringing indigenous arts, namely beadwork into the art museum for the exhibition *Ezakwantu* (1993) was to “facilitate the process of the National Gallery redefining itself both as an active centre of engagement with wider audiences and as an

325 Marilyn Martin, personal interview, 01/09/17.

326 Included was work by urban artists, university graduates, privately trained and mainstream artists, rural bead-workers, self-trained woodcarvers and outsider artists. Woodblock prints, carvings, beaded dolls, beaded aprons, linocuts, paintings, sculptures, drawings and watercolour sketches were all treated as art.

327 Nettleton was responsible for the introduction of African art into the art history syllabus at Wits in the 1970s and for developing the argument that beadwork was to be recognised as art.

328 The negotiation of the fine arts canon to include indigenous art has similarly been challenged and addressed by artists, activists, curators and collectors within other First Nation communities, such as New Zealand, Australia, Canada and Brazil.

investigator of new ideas” (1993:9). Secondly, it highlighted the question of how objects (such as beadwork) disrupted conventional practices of the ways in which artworks were classified, understood and exhibited in an art gallery (ibid.).³²⁹ The exhibition focused specifically on beadwork, which Martin explained,

... [did not fit comfortably] into existing definitions of art and hierarchies appropriate to an art museum, into the National Gallery ... [and] in order to do this [exhibition], traditional boundaries and terminologies had to be abandoned, assumptions had to be deconstructed and the very nature of representation had to be questioned (1993:7).

Tietze suggests that the focus on beadwork – the exhibition featured over three-hundred and seventy items including all forms of beadwork, as well as dresses, blankets, blanket pins, smoking equipment, paintings, and photographs – was in part “slightly serendipitous, to do with the collecting activities of art dealer Stephen Long” in the early 1990s (2017:173–174). The acquisition of extensive beadwork for a national collection of art however challenged both the definitions of art and its taxonomies (Davison, 1993:25).

As the beadwork – namely, objects of adornment and items of *dress/fashion* – became art, further classificatory challenges surrounded the objects in terms of the catalogue and the museal records. Although curators, Bedford and Kaufmann were committed to the recontextualisation of beadwork *as art*, the key question of the art-craft debate was raised in the exhibition’s catalogue – “is it ornament or clothing?” (1993:85).³³⁰ A decision taken for the publication, considered the relationship of the artefacts to the body, and explained this as such,

... the objects have been ordered broadly in a ‘head-to-toe’ sequence. This approach was favoured because of the variability of the material that does not easily fit into museum definitions and categories. A frequent problem was encountered when attempting to establish whether a piece of beadwork ... should be considered an undergarment or strictly ornamental. Similarly the English language does not offer adequate equivalents for the more than 38 descriptive Xhosa titles for necklaces (1993:85).

Diane Levy raised similar concerns with regards the classification “assumptions and concerns³³¹ which underpinned the practice of collecting and showing beadwork” in her research on The Brenthurst Collection, at the Johannesburg Art Gallery (1991:106). Debates about arts and crafts were still in their infancy in the late twentieth century and “the political dynamic in South Africa meant revisionist attitudes were slow to adjust” (Cooke, 2009:182).

Various enquiries about the classificatory system used for beadwork specifically at the National Gallery remained unanswered. Retired curator Kaufmann and current collections manager Nkosinathi Gumede both disregarded my requests. Gumede could not confirm how, or if the African Art collection was classified following any standard fine arts classification categories or sub-categories, recalling only that, recently retired curator, “Kaufman had a book where all of the objects in the collection were catalogued, but not in any particular order”.³³²

329 Bedford further argues that beadwork when regarded as art met the “necessary criteria by which we judge art: a strong aesthetic impact, encoding social, cultural and ideological meanings” (1993:12–13).

330 A second concern noted in the catalogue list: Artistic attribution. It is not possible to identify by name the artist who created each object because this information has rarely been recorded. Each item is identified by the cultural name artists give to themselves (1993:87).

331 Levy includes a critique of the question of ‘ethnicity’ used as a classificatory system – instead of history – suggesting that it remains important to be sensitive to the use of ‘ethnicity’ as a classifying term, and that language affiliations may provide a more neutral typology (1991:115–117).

332 Nkosinathi Gumede, personal interview, 14/08/17.

The Info-Muse documentation guide used by the National Gallery³³³ was established in 1995, based on the *Getty Art and Architecture Thesaurus (ATT)*. It distinguishes between two sub-categories, namely Fine Arts (various artistic disciplines; made for contemplation) and Decorative Arts (applied arts and their use in industry; may or may not have aesthetic value) (SMQ, n/d). ‘Costume’ falls under the latter – an object made from plant, mineral, animal or synthetic fibres, created to cover the body. This sub-category includes clothing accessories.³³⁴ ‘Jewelry’ also falls under Decorative Arts, and is defined as an object created to be worn on the body or on clothing as an ornament.³³⁵ This sub-category includes talismans or amulets to which magic powers are attributed. Beadwork would, following the above classification structure then fall under the category of decorative and not fine arts. While curators, gallerists and collectors such as Nettleton have been arguing that African sartorial objects, chiefly beadwork be considered and classified as art, the *ATT* guide clearly separates it as decorative rather than ‘contemplative’.³³⁶ The contemplative quality of beadwork is often further diminished as a result of the absence of the artist, or commonly referred to as ‘maker unknown.’

FASHIONS THAT CANNOT BE CLASSIFIED

It was Martin’s words (when reflecting on the *dress/fashion* artefacts in the National Gallery collection), which summed up the segregation of the sartorial at the National Gallery from the sartorial in the other collections, “what we bought was art, not fashion”.³³⁷ Riegels Melchior also states that “fashion is not art, nor a matter of concern to the primary public responsibility of art museums” (2014:5). Yet, I argue and there is ever-increasing evidence that *dress/fashion* has become increasingly legitimised as an art museum-worthy, culturally significant, and conceptually rich field of study, critique and contemplation.

I would argue that it is the nature, and timing, of the two incursions of African sartorial objects into the canon of fine art – firstly, in response to shifts in the art-craft debate, with the re-classification of beadwork and other objects of adornment as art, and secondly, in response to the ongoing, art-fashion debate – that has resulted in a lack of any clearly-articulated taxonomy for the sartorial objects in the National Gallery collection, assimilated largely during the transitional political, and transitional museal, context of the late 1990s and early 2000s. Neither Kaufmann nor Gumede could specify the details of the classification system of the African Art Collection, which I presume may have been a result of the impossibility of ordering of African sartorial objects as art within established, art classification structures and categories.³³⁸

The close study of the classificatory practices of the National Gallery raised three important points. The first issue concerns the classification of sartorial objects, as artworks that denies the socially, situated embodied nature of *dress/fashion*. With a focus on the makers (as auteurs), the wearers and acts of wearing are disregarded, and the ethnographic framing is replicated, positioning the objects geographically and ‘tribally’ attached to generic identity constructs. The second concern maps the underpinning distinction of ‘whose’ sartorial objects can be deemed art, as Davison describes, it is a selective emphasis on material from ‘other’ cultures that,

... reveals an inherently unequal premise. Personal adornments relating to Western cultural traditions are not classified according to the same criteria as applied to ‘others’, nor are there equal investments in their acquisition. This is so despite the fact that body transformation arts are not restricted to particular cultural groupings, on the contrary there is a universal human tendency to transform the body by the wearing of costume and personal adornments (Davison 1993:25).

333 Lailah Hisham, email correspondence, 24/08/17.

334 Ibid.

335 Ibid.

336 I discuss how this distinction becomes evident when the beadwork is exhibited in Chapter Three.

337 Martin, personal interview, 01/09/17.

338 Kaufmann alluded to her ‘unfinished work’ with regards the African Art collection and I suggest that the creation of a working taxonomy for African sartorial objects may have formed part of this unfinished business. Kaufmann, personal interview, 15/12/14.

Related to this concern, is the third issue, which addresses a broader, and still debatable, classification of fashion as art. These issues of inclusion or exclusion are evident in current exhibitions that focus on the sartorial, such as *Items: Is Fashion Modern?* (2017) at the MoMA, or the mandate for the forthcoming Zeitz Costume Institute that seeks to engage contemporary costume, fashion and body embellishments by both designers and artists, or the fact that although debates “still sputter on ... another string of blockbuster shows in New York and London [in 2018], confirms that fashion, as a craft and art form” has earned its noteworthy position within museums (Romano and Sampson, 2018).

Sartorial Readings Two

A TROUSER-LED INTERROGATION OF THE CLASSIFICATIONS

Through a second series of close readings of selected pairs of trousers (and an interpretation of one lacuna), I interrogate the classificatory forms determining the sartorial taxonomies across the three collections. As Hannah Turner maintains, “nomenclatures and naming systems are unique and deeply connected to the history and development of [each] individual institution” and continue to impact the objects in their care (2015:680).

Sartorial objects rely on the architecture of the classification structures to be made accessible to researchers, curators, visitors, collections managers, and source communities. Beadwork in the South African Museum collection illustrates this well: coloured beads constructed into a woven pattern are provided with numerous points for identification (although problematically so), as part of an ethnographic collection – they are assigned ‘tribal’ associations (with regional place names often provided as well); they are identified as being worn on a particular part of the body (neck, arm, waist, hips, etc.); and, they are usually ascribed to a particular custom or ritual. In contrast to this structure and system of meaning-making for indigenous objects as practiced in many ethnographic museums, the classification practices of Western dress collections largely assume a range of meanings as being fixed, stable and understood, such as dresses in the Cultural History Museum collection, which are not deemed specific to a particular cultural group or class, are presumed to be feminine (regardless of their origin), worn by white women (regardless of who may have purchased or owned the fashion object), and are often presented without descriptions for wearing nor for occasion.

That taxonomies came to signify rationality, objectivity, and credibility, Tseelon argues is deceptive, as “classification systems are not neutral methods of organising information ... [instead] elements of instability and precariousness are introduced, or posed by, the continuous challenges of ‘difference’ that resist the laws of any taxonomy (Tseelon, 2012:17–18). I present a close reading of three pairs of ‘cutoffs’ that disrupt the frameworks of their classifications as they blur the boundaries of tidy categorisation and disturb the stability of their disciplinary grammars. Secondly, I explore a classificatory exclusion, via the trouser suit that never entered the collections.

The sartorial artefacts in the South African Museum were ordered, following a linguistically based system developed for the museum by ethnographer Shaw, for the purpose of cataloguing the objects according to set ‘tribal’ identities. This meant that sartorial objects that showed signs of hybrid or disparate influences (and were not pure) would often not be classifiable, and therefore, would not have entered the collection. The first such hybrid objects, such as the beaded trousers, only entered the collection in the 1990s.

In contrast, the Cultural History Museum’s classification of its sartorial collections did not specify ‘ethnicity’, yet the implied ‘whiteness’ of the collection framework meant that the collection featured almost exclusively, Western items of dress/fashion worn by white South Africans. The beaded trousers that entered the collection in 1994 represented a particular moment of ‘redress’, worthy of some investigation here. Furthermore, the classification of these trousers as ‘TRAD’ distinguished the objects from the other, searchable classificatory categories and practices afforded the Western objects in the collection. Considering the size of the National Gallery’s African Art collection, approximately three thousand items, then-curator Kaufmann easily informed me that there were no trousers in the collection of *dress/fashion* objects. The National Gallery’s move to digitisation – currently only to accessible to staff³³⁹ – proved that a catalogue search of the collection was impossible.

I make a number of key points in relation to the classification of sartorial objects across the three museums, now amalgamated as Iziko Museums. Firstly, the three classificatory structures governing very similar, and in some cases almost the same objects, are disciplinarily determined and in this way, very different from one

339 Sensitivities with regards the GRAP103 listings included the fact that these records had valuations for each item in the collections as part of the national accounting audits completed at the time of this research. Hisham, email correspondence, 02/08/17.



Figure 26. SACHM143: Beadwork Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

another. Secondly, the classificatory languages are value-laden and reflected in the hierarchies, distinctions and categorisations in and across the collections. Thirdly, the effect of ‘tribing’ on the knowledge frameworks that govern sartorial objects in the collections and the inherent binaries of race, gender, class and culture within these museal practices. Lastly, I showed the ways in which the classification of the sartorial objects in the museums presented forms of silencing, through the skewed ordering of the bodies, subjectivities, and identities, which drew my attention to the limits of the various classifications via their notable lacunae.

CUTOFFS: BEADED *IBULUKWE* FROM TWO COLLECTIONS

Two pairs of cut-off, lined black, men’s trousers with beadwork in a distinct double-diamond design on the legs and further beadwork trims on the seams, and hems, shared a similar journey to the museums in the early 1990s. They both came to the museums via collector Long, yet their biographies reveal two distinct outcomes of different classificatory practices, as one pair was purchased by the South African Museum³⁴⁰ and the other was purchased two years later by the Cultural History Museum.³⁴¹ Both pairs are repurposed, black formal men’s trousers dating from the early twentieth century (a point I will return to later in this section). Both pairs are lined, with button-fly front openings, side pockets, and pleats. Both pairs have been shortened and hemmed by hand to reach just above the knees. Both pairs show signs of wear. And lastly, both pairs have used the same combination of double-diamond design³⁴² in white beads on the front and back of the legs, and white and turquoise bead trimmings on the seams and edges.

Thiemeyer points out that the decisive element of ‘specimens’ in museums is “not the individual object, but the relationship between objects ... together they can create knowledge that transcends what is feasible for an

340 SAM14268

341 SACHM94/143 TRAD

342 Among ‘Thembu’ symbols, a zigzag motif represented a local river and was named after it. Trees were also denoted by chevrons of various orientations and by diagonal or serrated vertical lines (van Wyk 2010:515).



Figure 27. SAM14268: Beadwork Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

individual piece” (2015:402). This point is borne out by the relationship between these two artefacts: without the South Africa Museum ‘specimen’, a reading of the Cultural History Museum ‘specimen’ would be different and in this case incomplete, and vice versa. What seems to be signs of wear, or missing beads and loose clumps of thread at the end of the rows of beadwork (see Figure 26), refers to a practice that Long describes where beaded items of earlier use are ‘unpicked’ and the beads are re-used in new designs, or for new applications.³⁴³ However, in this case, it is the presence of the South African Museum trousers that shows us these were not beads that were removed, but rather mother-of-pearl buttons used to embellish the beadwork designs that were cut off, perhaps for re-use elsewhere (see Figure 27).

The purchase of this pair, by the Cultural History Museum, presents two possibilities: firstly, Long was able to convey that although it was ‘incomplete’, the absence of the buttons did not impact the object’s intrinsic museal value; and secondly, Long withheld the details of this ‘absence’, and the curators and collections managers at the Cultural History Museum were less concerned with the completeness of the item, and more interested in its obvious ‘authenticity’.³⁴⁴ Long accepted R48,00 for the ‘damaged’ pair, which was the same that was paid for a second pair of *ibulukwe* sold to the museum in this tranche of beaded artefacts.³⁴⁵

Hamilton and Leibhammer argue that treating the objects of material culture collections as archives ensures that they no longer “stand as representative of a ‘culture’ or as aesthetic achievements, but [rather] as inherited resources for engagement in the present” (2016:414). In my analyses of the trousers that follow I tackle various questions of agency, participation, identity and materiality.

343 Long, personal interview, 23/09/15.

344 Prior to 1994, all objects presented at the Cultural History Museum of ethnographic or indigenous origin would be referred to the South African Museum. A general knowledge of ‘tribal’ dress or beadwork practices was not developed nor welcomed at Cultural History Museum.

345 SACHM94/151 TRAD is an exemplary object of ‘art museum quality’; namely original, in almost pristine condition, and articulating a unique mastery of making and translation. In this regard, the object could have attracted a far larger price as an art object, if considered as art, and not as ethnographic object.



Figure 28. SAM14268: Hem Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

My first enquiry considers the lost narratives of the ‘original’ re-purposed trousers in both cases. Karen Tranberg Hansen in her study of ‘salaula’ or secondhand clothing in Uganda argues that,

... we must not take the Western significance for granted. For secondhand garments do not travel with ready-made meanings attached to them. [These are] created in the practices through which they are put to use. It is in clothing performance that meanings are lodged and constructed by [new] wearers and viewers, [where] meanings [become] the product of distinct dress practices in specific situations (2009:113–4).

The overwriting of the original lives of these ‘dinner-suit’ trousers occurred through the hands of the women who cut, hemmed and beaded them (see Figure 28). Together with this refashioning came a re-inscription of a new cultural narrative that is then reflected in a new ‘ordering’ of these objects with the museum. Kopytoff suggests that “what is significant about the adoption of alien objects – as of alien ideas – is not the fact that they are adopted, but the way they are culturally redefined and put to use” (1986:67). A necessary act of erasure occurs in the process of secondhand clothing circulation as the donated or sold artefact has no provenance, the very opposite of ‘provenance’ and museal naming practices with regard to sartorial donations and purchases. The single surviving ‘identification’ of secondhand artefacts would be in the form of brand-labels; yet these tell us very little about the owners, wearers or occasions at which the artefacts were worn. I contend here, that these re-purposed hybrid objects³⁴⁶ lose the traces of their former wearing (and wearers), and instead of circulating as ‘secondhand’ objects, they are in fact given a new ‘life’.

In this regard I concur with Nettleton who argues that the beading of manufactured items (blankets, waistcoats or trousers) and beadwork itself are representations of modernity, instead of being ‘traditional’ and deemed

346 The notion of the hybrid object is not something particular to this South African context or time period, as outlined by Robert Duplessis in *The Material Atlantic* (2016) where he interrogates the modifications by both non-Europeans and European settlers in the colonies, as they mixed their own styles of cloth and fashion with European styles to produce new styles.



Figure 29. SACHM143: Fly-front Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

un-modern, as these acts by women reflect contemporary engagements (see Figure 29), with new family structures, new economic contexts and new social structures (2014b:351–352). Nettleton further describes the ambivalent double-nature of the beaded artefact as blurring the binary of ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’,

... [where] beadwork registers in the colonial record as an index of the uncivilised, but silent witness to women’s work [albeit] with imported, modern materials, and as part of a constantly changing clothing regime. The ambivalence in beadwork’s status as traditional, is thus caused because, not only was it a modern phenomenon, but because it was also largely developed and vastly expanded by the women left behind in the rural areas, the place of ‘tradition’, ‘craft’ and ‘custom’ which, even though it underwent radical changes with the advent and continuation of migrant labour, was nevertheless thought of by most migrants as a place of continuity and links to the ancestral realm (2014b:348).

When these trousers entered the museums, two consecutive sets of losses occurred: first their temporalities were erased in their uptake of a ‘new’ life and their second life temporalities were erased upon entry into the museum, and secondly the recognition of both sets of ownership are lost upon musealisation. As the trousers exited their ‘first’ life, the identity of their wearers was not carried forward to,³⁴⁷ or by³⁴⁸ the new ‘owners’ and secondly, (as noted in the previous chapter) when these objects were sold to dealer Long, the latter wearers’ names were neither provided nor recorded. These losses, whether enacted in the manner of ethnographic practice at the South African Museum, or due to the separately assigned category of TRAD in the Cultural History Museum, however equally deny these material culture objects their historicity in terms of their multiple, embodied and socially complex past lives.

347 This would include when garments were sold by a trader or dealer as an exchange item.

348 This would include *dress/fashion* objects donated by someone known to the new owner. This information would not have ‘stayed’ with the object.



Figure 30. SACHM88/316: Hem Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

A FURTHER PAIR OF CUTOFFS: TAXONOMIES THAT DIVIDE

A third pair of 'cutoffs' in the collections³⁴⁹ had a different reception and acquired an altogether different yet still, quite inconclusive record. This pair of cotton twill shorts, donated to the Cultural History Museum by Mrs. Brown in 1988, was worn during the Boer War as trousers by her father-in-law William Brown, which his son (*her husband* – my insertion) later cut and wore as shorts.³⁵⁰ As the classification practices of Western dress in museums stipulate the naming of the owner or wearer, the periodisation and occasion wherever possible, and the deemed importance of the object for the museum's collection, this pair of shorts enters the museum with a fairly detailed provenance. Its historicity, and in this case even a genealogy, locates the provenance of these 'cutoffs' within a broader, national narrative, aimed at a collective (although skewed Afrikaner) public memory.

The shorts are tan-coloured, made from very heavy, thick cotton twill and trimmed with small, mass-produced aluminium buttons on the front and back waistband for braces. They feature a button-fly front, a high rise at the back, slanted front pockets, and are cut to mid-thigh length, neatly hemmed by machine in a lighter coloured thread (see Figure 30). As a museum piece (Steele, 1998:327) the curators considered the shorts to be in a good condition³⁵¹ with only two deep folds from storage and limited signs of wear and tear. Worn by both father and son, as a soldier first and later perhaps as a handyman at home – there is a smudge of white paint on the left front thigh (see Figure 31) – the shorts, however show little evidence of extreme hardwearing or over-use. A few stains and small nips appear in the cloth, but the seams are not scuffed, the pocket edges are not tatty, and there is little sign of saddle damage.³⁵²

349 *Cutoffs* are homemade shorts made by cutting the legs off trousers, usually after holes have been worn around the knees. This extends the useful life of the trousers. The remaining leg fabric may be hemmed or left to fray after being cut (Wikipedia, n/d).

350 SACHM88/316

351 Van Delen, personal communication, 14/11/14.

352 If the uniform was worn extensively during the Boer War, I argue that signs of wear and tear would show from horse riding over long distances.



Figure 31. SACHM88/316: White Paint Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

My focus shifts to William Brown, the first owner of the trousers. My initial inquiry led me to the genealogy project of British Concentration Camp survivors – William George Brown, son of Richard Frederick Brown, was the youngest of eight siblings imprisoned at Barberton camp (Geni, n/d). Born in 1895, he lived to the age of twenty-three only. The records show that three of his siblings married and had children, however there is no record of marriage for this specific William Brown. Another genealogical search for William Brown produced a different possibility. As a descendant of the 1820 settlers, William Wharton Brown was English, born in the Eastern Cape in 1894, son of Alfred Miles Brown, who married Mary Torr whom was also born in 1894 (Tanner-Tremaine, n/d). They had four children; he passed away in 1948, she passed away in 1972. Yet, neither of these particular William Browns could have worn these trousers in the Boer War (1899–1902) as they were made to fit an adult and not a child.

I am not trying to present a definitive genealogical result; instead I explore the classificatory illusion of a ‘name’. Was William Brown an English-speaking South African or an Afrikaner? Did he wear the uniform as a supporter of the British in the war, or as a rebel? British khaki uniforms were first worn by British troops in South Africa during the second Boer War, 1899–1902. As the Boer War continued,

... Boers wore such a mix of private clothing (their original “going to war” attire) and captured British uniforms (practical replacements for Boer clothing “used up” in hard campaigning), that the British frequently mistook Boers for their own “colonial troops” or for British collaborators, as they were dressed the same (Du Toit, 2012).

Was the well-preserved and slightly worn uniform, kept by Brown Senior as a souvenir, which as Susan Stewart writes, serves as a trace of the authentic experience (1996:135)? If Brown Senior, as a young adult around 1900, ‘wore’ them in the Boer War (1899–1902), he may have married and had children shortly thereafter. It is possible that Mrs. Brown, who donated the shorts to the Cultural History Museum in 1988, may have met and married Brown Junior some time in the 1930s.



Figure 32. SACHM88/316: Waistband Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

It is then also interesting to speculate what possible ‘relationship’ Brown Junior had with this pair of trousers. One ‘act’ that we can interrogate in this context is the act of ‘cutting’. Compared to the hand-hemmed examples of the two pairs of beaded trousers described above, these shorts are very neatly machine hemmed (possibly even by Mrs. Brown herself) (see Figure 30).³⁵³

It is possible to consider a range of overlapping readings for ‘cutting’ the trousers. The first interpretation takes into account its context as part of a historical event, and a reading of domestic practices prevalent in late 1930s South Africa. The Great Depression, the war efforts, and the impact of rationing may have necessitated a ‘make-do-and-mend’ approach,³⁵⁴ and as a practical solution, these extremely serviceable trousers were easily translated into a ‘new’ wearable item, as the shorts showed minimal signs earlier wear (see Figure 32). A second impulse that may have influenced Brown Junior, noted particularly in America, but also gaining popularity in South Africa, was the casualisation of fashion after the Roaring Twenties, and shorts were becoming more acceptable for men, as were trousers for women. These trousers, with the legs cut-off above the knee – called ‘cutoffs’ – were popular in the 1930s.

A third observation of the notion of cutting would consider the act as a ‘severance’ revealing possible ways in which the son’s ‘agency’ was manifested onto, or with the object, as an inscription of his own meaning making and mode of wearing. Did this ‘cutting’ suggest a cut from the past a break from history? As Stewart argues, the souvenir³⁵⁵ acquires value through the material relations to a specific location, which, like the collection,

353 Other items in the collections (particularly in the ethnographic and TRAD collections) show more radical treatments of cutting and shredding of hems, sometimes in exaggerated zigzag shapes and sometimes as fringing for a tassled effect. This includes two pairs of beaded re-purposed trousers SAM14394 and SAM 14445, as well as three re-purposed overall jackets SACHM 94/685 to 94/688.

354 *Make Do and Mend* was a pamphlet issued by the British Ministry of Information in the midst of WWII. It was intended to provide housewives with useful tips on how to be both frugal and stylish in times of harsh rationing.

355 Stewart argues that the souvenir has little if any value attached to its materiality, claiming instead that “the power of the souvenir lies in the narrative of origins – as narratives of interiority and authenticity. These narratives do not belong to the object, but instead are the narratives of the possessors” (1996:136).

“displays the romance of the contraband, for its scandal, is its removal from its ‘natural’ location” (1996:135–6). Did Brown Junior use the ‘cut’ to “break the continuity” (Suterwalla, 2013:57)? Did the change from trousers to shorts ‘overwrite’ and erase the history of the object’s past, its aura or memory, in ways similar to the cutting and beading of the trousers described above? The classification description tells us the son ‘cut’ and ‘wore’ them, but was the wearing a celebration of nationalistic pride, or was the cut committed to sever the memory, and the casual wearing of the souvenir performed as a parodic act?

In a study of punk style, feminist fashion theorist Shehnaz Suterwalla identifies the punk ‘cut’ that, for both men and women,

... involved customizing clothes: the punk ‘cut’ epitomised the style’s creative tactics. It was through cutting, slashing, poking and pinning that objects were rendered strange, personal stories were expressed, new histories exposed (2013:55–56).

The performative rupture of punk as both a form of agency and a form of expression, argues Suterwalla, furthermore contributed towards “challenging and unfixing the static categories of the hegemonic cultural styles” of the mid-1970s in Britain (2013:299). Punk was “not just about what you looked like, it was about what you did” (Suterwalla, 2013:55).

In the close readings of the three cutoffs and their records, currently classified as very distinct objects in the collections, I have investigated the possibilities of shared practices, as well as the divergent disciplinary affects of the written records on the way in which the three cutoffs are understood, and remembered. Kopytoff argues that, “biographies of things can make salient what might otherwise remains obscure” (1986:67). The answers to questions of identity, memory and history do not lie in the taxonomies of the museums. The complexity of understanding the social, cultural and political potential of *dress/fashion* objects in museums is determined by their past embodied natures and the multiple ways of the fashioned body’s ‘being’ and ‘belonging’ in the world. In this way, the reading of sartorial objects in museums as archives, following Hamilton and Liebhammer, seeks to “enhance significantly the capacities of these materials to illuminate the past” (2016:414).

EXCLUSIONARY CATEGORIES: WHERE IS KEWPIE’S TROUSER SUIT?

In tracking the various pairs of trousers, pants, overalls, shorts, and slacks in the collections, I became interested in what was excluded from the sartorial archive. Casualwear items such as jeans, or tracksuit pants, as well as trousers worn by cross-dressers, homosexuals or trans-people are largely absent from museum collections. Were these artefacts denied entry, or did the existing classification structures restrict even the possibility for negotiating their acquisition? In addition, how did these ‘refusals’ manifest across the three museum collections? In due course these objects and their associated narratives were rendered invisible.³⁵⁶

The annual Association of Dress Historians’ *Dress That Crosses Borders And Challenges Boundaries* conference in October 2017 presented disruptive objects, collections, individuals and their dress narratives.³⁵⁷ The question of genderless, cross-gender or transgender clothing, one of the key ‘disruptors’ in museums, was interrogated in terms of how museums did – or did not – catalogue men’s clothes that were owned and worn by women, women’s clothes owned and worn by men, or clothing that could not be gendered.

Since the early 2000s, a host of projects, seminars and exhibitions have addressed this question of representation of queer perspectives, identities and objects in museums. Fashion theorist Patrik Steorn’s queer tours and exhibition *Queer: Desire, Power and Identity* (2011) were held at Stockholm’s National Museum of Fine Arts. *Article One* began as a series of interventions of queer representation in Swedish museums in 2007,

³⁵⁶ Shaun Cole, email correspondence, 01/11/17.

³⁵⁷ This included Martin Pels, *The Androgenous Dress of the British Artist, Hannah Gluckstein, 1895–1978*, and Inga Grandien, *She Was Naught ... of a Woman Except In Sex: The Cross-dressing of Queen Christina of Sweden, 1629–1689* (Dress Historians, 2017).

which developed to become the online *Unstraight Museum* launched in 2011 (Stearn, 2011). The Fashion Institute of Technology's exhibition *A Queer History of Fashion: From the Closet to the Catwalk* (2013) in New York exhibited,

... approximately one-hundred ensembles, from eighteenth century menswear styles associated with an emerging gay subculture to twenty-first century high fashion ... [that] honoured the gay and lesbian designers of the past and present (The Museum at FIT, 2013).

These projects all challenge the exclusionary violence of heteronormative frameworks at work in museum collection and exhibitionary practices. *The Museum of Transology* (2017) opened at the Fashion Space Gallery in London before moving to the Brighton Museum and Art Gallery (2017), and according to curator E-J Scott, presented,

... a bold, brave and profound collection of artefacts and photographic portraiture reflecting the realities of modern trans life, whilst also posing a bigger question about the omission of queer identities in larger national museum collections (Loukia, 2017a).

The exhibition forms part of a two-year *Be Bold* programme based in Brighton, of projects, exhibitions, displays and activities to celebrate and connect with queer lives, histories, objects, narratives and cultures,³⁵⁸ including the exhibition and publication of *Gluck: Art and Identity* (2017) that explores the modern, gender fluid British artist Gluck's life, art and dress from biographical, curatorial, material culture and art historical perspectives.³⁵⁹ Similarly, in Liverpool, costume collector Peter Farrer's cross-dressing wardrobe is on exhibit at Sudley House (National Museums Liverpool, 2017a), and the *Pride and Prejudice: Bringing stories out of the closet* project from the National Museums' Decorative Arts collections has researched the LGBT-related meanings of their fashion collections, and presents these objects "in a different light to how they may originally have been seen" (National Museums Liverpool, 2017b).

Much like Liverpool and Brighton, Cape Town has a recognised history of queer culture. This history is particularly noteworthy in the Western Cape's coloured, predominantly working class community, that is mostly credited with the earliest and most formalised expression of homosexuality in the city (Chetty, 1995:117). As a rule homosexuality was not tolerated in South Africa in the conservative post-war era, as Mark Gevisser illustrates,

... for many South African lesbians after WWII, wearing slacks in public became a yardstick of liberation. It was a fiercely clandestine world. 'Jackie', a teacher who met Ellie at a swimming gala [in 1956], remembers that, "you only came alive on the weekend. During the week you kept up all pretences. I had my hair set every week, and wore high heels, skirts and make-up. I wouldn't have dreamed of going to a movie in town in slacks". Both Ellie and Jackie remember vividly the thrill of first wearing slacks to town' (1995:20).

Yet, in the 1950s and 1960s, writes Andrew Tucker, "in District Six and the neighbouring areas, queer life was able to prosper" (2009:77). In a series of photographs of Cape Town's famous Madam Costello's Ball³⁶⁰

358 *Wear It Out*, is a collaborative project with students from the London College of Fashion led by Martin Pels, Jeffrey Horsley and Amy de La Haye (Loukia, 2017b).

359 The exhibition *Gluck: Art & Identity* will bring together around 30 rarely-seen paintings and extensive personal ephemera – including clothing, accessories, photographs and press cuttings. Gluck, known for her cross-dressing style, has become an icon of gender fluidity. Gluck (1895–1978), born Hannah Gluckstein, was the subject of the exhibition that brought together rarely seen paintings and extensive personal ephemera – including clothing, accessories, photographs and press cuttings. Gluck, known for her cross-dressing style, is an icon of gender fluidity.

360 Madame Costello, or Joey, was an older, well-known drag queen, and her home was a regular venue for drag parties (Chetty, 1995:120).



Figure 33. GALA: AM 2886/11. 'I was on my way to work in the morning at Salon Kewpie in Kensington' (1967/ 68). Photo by Darling Street 'Movie Snaps' street photographer. Courtesy of GALA.

featured in *Drum* in 1959, Ian Berry captured candid images of Cape Town's queer community (Vitra Design Museum, n/d). The photographs are supported by an ambivalent, if not somewhat derogatory text as a quasi-sociological investigation³⁶¹ titled "Oh, so this is what they call a Cape Moffie Drag", in which an unnamed author writes,

... this was a party given by Cape Town's famous 'moffies'. The moffies are people who were born as males, but would like to be female. By day they wear trousers and go to work – as factory workers, offices cleaners, domestic servants, hairdressers, among other things. At night they often blossom out in fan-tale finery, lisping and primping and coquetting. At around 4 a.m. [when the party] did end, the make-up was running down the faces of the older moffies, and their beards were beginning to show through. They looked tired and lonely and very pathetic (*Drum*: January 1959:60).

One such 'moffie' on the scene was the famous cross-dressing hairdresser Kewpie, also known as Capucine. In a study of the expressions of gay identity via vestimentary codes in Cape Town, Ida Tareldsen draws on the iconicity of individuals such as Kewpie (2015:22). Born Eugene Fritz, Kewpie grew up in District Six in a family of six children taking ballet classes and cross-dressing from an early age (Chetty, 1995:115). As a young coloured 'moffie', Chetty continues,

... Kewpie moved into what is now Kensington to set up his salon around 1954, the first in the area. It was a major achievement for a drag queen, who was already vivacious, in the news, and on the move (1995:115).

In a colour photograph labeled 'I was on my way to work in the morning at Salon Kewpie in Kensington, taken in Darling Street by the 'Movie Snaps' street photographer, 1967/1968', Kewpie presents an androgynous sixties fashionability (see Figure 33).³⁶² Behind Kewpie is a man in a suit, another more casually dressed man, and two women in loose fitting work clothing as they approach the photographer.³⁶³ Kewpie wears a stylish light brown, two-piece women's trouser suit with a pale pink, high-buttoned blouse and he carries a large, light brown patent leather ladies handbag. His hair is cut short, and is blonde and blow-waved. He wears large, round, dark sunglasses and red lipstick. The jacket is boxy to accommodate his shoulders, but otherwise cut narrow tapering at his hips, with buttons right-over-left and mock pocket flaps. The trousers are slim cut too. The folds in the jacket front suggest that the suit look is 'homemade'.³⁶⁴

Donated by Kewpie himself in 1999 to the Gay and Lesbian Archives (GALA), the Kewpie Collection is entirely photographic.³⁶⁵ Although GALA do have some items of clothing, a wig and a fairly large number of activists t-shirts in their collections, Kewpie did not donate any sartorial items. The question then remains, what did happen to Kewpie's trouser suit?³⁶⁶ The evidence, and infamy of Kewpie's gender-defying (and at times outrageous) wardrobe presented in the photographs³⁶⁷, starkly underlines one of the lacunae in the collections – that of disciplinary-blurring, LGBTQ fashion. This also cannot be separated from the political imperatives of

361 Part of the regular stories of the lives of outrageous or daring South Africans that featured in *Drum* from the early 1950s to the mid-1970s shaped as investigative photo-essays.

362 Kewpie annotated all of over five hundred photographs donated to the Gay and Lesbian Archives (GALA) in 1999. Linda Chernis, email correspondence, 25/08/17.

363 The photograph is annotated "Darling Street 'Movie Snaps' street photographer".

364 Patterns such as Simplicity Pattern Number 6124 or 6685 show similar 3-button jacket designs, and pants Pattern Number 6214 all date from 1965, were readily available in South Africa in the 1960s. Men's suit jackets would have linings and interlinings to support the fabric and prevent these kinds of buckles in the garment.

365 See also Jenny Marsden's research in the project *Queer Beyond London, Sexuality and Locality in Brighton, Leeds, Manchester and Plymouth* (Marsden, 2017).

366 The question would apply to his day-to-day fashions, as well as the spectacular drag-items from the countless shows, and parties spanning almost thirty years.

367 See also the film *Kewpie: A Normal Daughter* (1997) by Jack Lewis.

the day that excluded the dress of non-whites from the costume or cultural history museum collections, not only in Cape Town, but also throughout South Africa.

The Cultural History Museum however did accept Mrs. Spooner's trouser suit and Mr. Immelman's clothes for a day at work. Had Kewpie's trouser suit been considered for the Cultural History Museum collection (before the merger in 1999), "we would have accepted the suit" assured curator van Delen.³⁶⁸ Yet, two concerns surface in this provocation. Firstly, without a specific gender category for its classification, my assumption is that the suit would have been accessioned into the TRAD category as the object's blurring of sartorial and gender boundaries would have made it impossible to categorise within the heteronormative binary of the museum's classification system. Secondly, had Kewpie's trouser suit been presented to the museum (even as a donation), the implicit 'whites-only' collection ambit of the Cultural History Museum until the mid-1990s with the fall of apartheid, meant that this trouser suit, worn by a person of colour would have unsettled the narrative, and most likely been 'declined'. Further to this, the perception of museums as interested only in collecting and representing 'white' and not coloured histories, contributed to the 'impossibility' of Kewpie considering the Cultural History Museum as an eager, or interested recipient of his sartorial legacy. The violence of museal exclusion resound as a double rejection in Kewpie's case: firstly of the sartorial story of a non-heteronormative fashion icon, and secondly, of the sartorial history of a person of colour.

EIGHT DISRUPTIVE SARTORIAL REFLECTIONS

In the readings of pants both in and outside of the museums' classification systems, I have explored the disciplinary frameworks that determine the classifications of two 'very similar' objects from two separate collections and the effects of their classification (both analogous and different) on their biographies. Secondly, I identified how the different classificatory practices script notions of agency, modernity and individuality into the frameworks of the taxonomies that perpetuate ideas about archive, 'tribe' and identity. Thirdly, I explored the disavowal of sartorial objects that fall outside the rigid gender, racial or class categories that determine museum collection accessions and their practices.

This allowed me to draw eight observations that expose the disciplinary violences, and silences, enacted upon the sartorial objects in their musealisation, as well as confront lacunae within the museum's classificatory frameworks. Firstly, by using a *very similar* object type – in this case the two pairs of black, beaded cutoffs – I was able to show how the ethnographic classification system demanded different sets of descriptors from those determined by the cultural history classification system. These distinct classificatory systems impose different epistemic frameworks onto the objects that not only condition the way in which these objects are approached and understood at the point of museumification, but also, have resonance and repercussions throughout their lives in the museum. In this instance, the beaded cutoffs that entered the Cultural History Museum in the extra classificatory category TRAD were treated separately from the conventional *dress/fashion* objects that entered the womenswear, menswear or childrenswear categories thereby placing them outside history and modernity. Their accession card following the Cultural History Museum's classificatory system could not be completed – the names of wearer and the maker are blank, and there is no invitation to consider a deeper description.

Secondly, the inclusion of 'traditional', indigenous artefacts in a collection predominantly focused on Eurocentric and Western fashion demands attention. Framed within the broader shifts of South African politics, the entry into the Cultural History Museum, of the 'Fengu' boy's beaded cutoffs, in 1994 illustrates the institutional need to 'fill the gaps' in the collections so as to become more representative of the new national identity. Objects previously collected only by the ethnographic and art museums were now being purchased by the cultural history collection.

My third observation, deals with the third pair of cutoffs in this reading, which offers a counterpoint to the two

³⁶⁸ Van Delen, personal interview, 22/12/17.

other pairs of beaded pants. The Western *dress/fashion* classificatory practices utilised in the accessioning of this pair – its naming (belonging to William Brown), its historicity (worn during the Boer War), and in this case, a genealogy (from father to son) – locates the provenance of these cutoffs within a broader narrative of Afrikaner nationalism. The entry in the record, aimed at contributing towards, and forging a public memory, represents the widespread and politically motivated drive to construct a comprehensive, Nationalist narrative via museums. Here the practice of naming wearers and/or owners of sartorial objects ensures that they are remembered via their inclusion into history – in this case, a history skewed by the politics of the day.

By contrast, in my fourth observation, I note how ethnographic classificatory practices inflict an epistemic silencing on the names, lives and thereby narratives of the owners or wearers of the objects. This cannot be considered outside of the constructs of racial segregation of colonial and later, apartheid South Africa. By reading the trousers as metonyms for the original wearers or owners, I read the fashion artefact as once embodied by a living person, rather than as a specimen or object of curiosity that is denied any memory of wearer or owner. Not one wearer is named in the classification of all the pants in the ethnographic collections, whereas almost half of those in the cultural history collections are. The disavowal of personal agency or an expression of individuality and history imposed on the two beaded pants, differs widely from the identification and historical placement afforded the Brown family's cutoffs, where the object is made meaningful because of its relationship to an individual (by name), to aspects of personal agency (made for; worn by), and to its historicity (on the occasion of war, marriage, etc.).

A fifth observation extrapolated from the close analysis of the classification of the cutoffs is the notion of individual agency as symptomatic of a form of modernity.³⁶⁹ Where Brown Junior 'cut off' the trouser legs as an act of casualisation,³⁷⁰ violation,³⁷¹ or comfort,³⁷² all the 'traditional' cut-off pants in the collections are called 'shorts', and the agency of change is denied in the acquisition record. The very obvious evidence of shortening or cutting the secondhand pants, with careful hand-stitched hems in the examples here,³⁷³ bears witness to the crafting of new sartorial identities – of self-fashioning and individual acts of agency enacted upon Western commodities. The classification of these trousers as decidedly 'traditional' however disavows any recognition of individual intervention. In much the same way as Nettleton troubles the concept of beading and bead work, suggesting that, instead of being 'traditional' and deemed un-modern, the acts of cutting, hemming and beading, mostly by women, represent a contemporary and considered refashioning, as well as a re-inscription of the meaning and life of the pants.

Related to this, is my sixth observation. As much as the notion of agency is denied in the classification of 'traditional' items, so too is the notion of time – the traditional cut-off trousers are represented as being without history. In the case of these hybrid objects, this practice denies both the original history of the pants (as a secondhand artefact they had a life in the early twentieth century, an owner or wearer, and an 'ending of that life), and the remaking or refashioning accomplished years later. However, were the trousers located within mid-century South Africa economic and socio-political history, the act of cutting and beadwork would be contextualised within a framework broader politics, of enforced labour movement, and of deepening political restrictions, as well as questions of economy, autonomy, mobility and individuality. Furthermore the double time of these hybrid pants and their 'double storied-ness'³⁷⁴ to my knowledge has not yet been addressed museologically. These double lives radically confront the classificatory limits within the museums' various collections, and require closer attention as Iziko Museums develops the architecture for their digital project.

369 A human capacity to control, change or drive the world.

370 A common trend noted in fashion as morals relaxed post WWII.

371 It is unclear whether Brown Junior cut the shorts off in an act of rebellion, severing memory with history, his father, the past.

372 The shorts do not show much sign of wear, and their shortening may have been an attempt to make them more functional. There is a splash of white paint on the left thigh, which may indicate their use as workwear and not as a fashion item.

373 The Brown's cutoffs were machine hemmed – indicative of access to technology afforded to white South Africans, but perhaps another point altogether – the accession card gives the agency to her husband, even though it is most probable that Mrs Brown would have hemmed the shorts.

374 Similarly a series of workwear overalls and jackets in the collections – SAM14445 and SACHM 94/685–688 – bear witness to these processes.

In my final two observations, I turn my attention to another narrative that has remained largely unwritten in museums. Sartorial objects that blur or defy boundaries can make classification difficult, and arguably as a consequence they, and their narratives, often cannot enter the museum. This in due course renders the objects (and related lives, stories, beings) invisible in fashion histories. By identifying a 'queer gap' in the collections, I have shown how particular biases operated across the various classificatory systems in my study, as ideologies 'gate-keeping' the collections, and deeming certain artefacts uncollectable, for example normative gender values rendering certain identities and objects invisible. While Mrs. Spooner's trouser suit and Mr. Immelman's working clothes both seamlessly entered the collection, Kewpie's trouser outfit, in the photograph annotated "on my way to work", would not have been 'welcomed'. Firstly, the political imperatives of the day excluded the dress of non-whites from the costume or cultural history collections, thereby refusing the trouser suit worn by Kewpie, a coloured man, regardless of the explicit fashionability of his dress (as in the case of Mrs. Spooner's pants that were accepted into the collection), or the degree of his social credential (as in the case of Mr. Immelman's rather bland, and worn, work attire that did enter the collection).

Lastly, in my final observation, when Iziko Museums began to collect *dress/fashion* to 'fill the gaps', the purchase of a number of carnival 'costumes' was decided on to represent 'the coloured community' – based primarily on a collective cultural stereotype. The evidence, infamy and collective memory of Kewpie's gender-defying (and at times outrageous) wardrobe, however did not fit the museum's conservative criteria of culture. Kewpie's suit also starkly underlines one of the lacuna in the collections – that of disciplinary-blurring, LGBTQ fashion. The museal violence of exclusion and silence resound in Kewpie's case, as a double rejection: firstly of the sartorial history of a person of colour, and secondly of the sartorial story of a non-heteronormative fashion icon. Via the cutoffs that disrupted the boundaries of tidy categorisation, and Kewpie's trouser suit that demonstrated a lacuna, I have shown how the disciplinary dispositions governing the collections in my study render different forms of meaning, association, expression and understanding in relation to the sartorial.

CHAPTER THREE:

CURATED IDENTITY POLITICS ON DISPLAY

In this chapter,³⁷⁵ I consider how the sartorial objects from the three collections, framed by their disparate systems of classification and organisation, have been put to use by the museums, so as to reflect upon the disciplinary discourses that govern the display tropes, as well as shifts in broader socio-political global and local contexts that framed and influenced these developments. I aim to explore the extent to which *dress/fashion* exhibitions draw on the knowledge structures embedded within the disciplines, and how these continue to challenge Iziko Museums' efforts to reframe the sartorial in their collections.

Questions of race, class, tradition, agency and modernity, that featured predominantly in the development of the collections and their classifications, are also evident in their display, made apparent through curatorial mechanisms such as the use and choice of mannequins, the conceptual framing of the exhibitions, or applied notions of temporality. I consider the effects and impact of a selection of *dress/fashion* exhibitions in the museums in this study, in terms of their capacities to underpin and sustain concepts such as segregation and marginalisation, and the classificatory 'violence' that perpetuates binary representations of African fashion as 'traditional' and Western fashion as modern. Two concerns drive this chapter; the first is the various roles and identities of the absent, or otherwise substituted, bodies in fashion exhibitions. The second concern is the ideological underpinnings of various discourses and museal practices involved in the curation of sartorial objects.

In 2010, Laura Cumming, reviewing Christian Boltanski's exhibition, *Personnes*, at the Grand Palais in Paris, identified the metonymic power of 'clothes as bodies' in her description of the exhibition,

... *Personnes*, the piece is called: people, but at the same time no one. Sixty-nine camps, but there are no tents and no living people, only thousands of old clothes lying face down on the floor. Is this where they fell or where they were laid? The irresistible metaphor springs literal in the visitor's mind, as if clothes could have bodies or faces (2010).

Boltanski explains, "in all my work, from the beginning to now, there's always this idea that used *clothes* are like a *body*" (Boltanski, cited in Cumming, 2010). Yet, that their owners are unknown, suggests Cumming, "equates very precisely with the universality of the evidence – a watch, a coat – and the poignant truth that one could only mourn the unknown through an act of the imagination" (2010). Similarly, the four thousand pairs of shoes on display at the United States Holocaust Museum are "the objects that leave the most profound impression on the visitors. [The shoes] show the magnitude of Nazi murder through something so deeply personal", claims curator Steven Luckert (2012).³⁷⁶

Seven years after Boltanski's exhibition, Chinese dissident artist, Ai Weiwei, presented a different 'pile of clothes'. *Laundromat* (2017), at New York's Deitch Projects, consisted of two thousand and forty-six items of clothing that were left behind at the refugee camp, Idomeni, Greece (after the camp was forcibly shut down in 2016), which Weiwei and his team carefully collected, sorted, washed, cleaned, and pressed. In a monumental display of carefully-hung clothes, meticulously-arranged shoes and precisely-folded blankets, Weiwei 's exhibition of the cared-for everyday objects was "synonymous of caring" for the refugees (Macindoe, 2017).

375 In this chapter I follow the same three museums in the same order addressing the display tropes and their developments with regards to the effects of these on public engagements with sartorial objects.

376 The 4000 shoes are on loan from the State Museum of Majdanek in Lublin, Poland, and the request for their return had implications for the United States Holocaust Museum (Boyle, 2012).

Through the imposition of his taxonomy however, argues fashion theorist Julie Macindoe, the belongings of the refugees became dispersed as they themselves had been dispersed – shoes were laid out altogether, some in pairs, some as single remainders; jackets were all hung together, children's clothes were separated from adult clothes, and all the jeans were neatly suspended on matching hangers (2017). The garments were familiar and everyday, yet “the clothing was, and is, historically significant as representative of those who are refugees” (Macindoe, 2017). Less a retail store, and more like a large, collective wardrobe, argues Macindoe, the t-shirts, jeans, jackets, and shoes no longer identified individual wearers, belonged instead to collective groups of objects, and represented a “collective people” (2017).

French fashion curator Olivier Saillard describes his move away from the key role of the body in displays of sartorial artefacts in *The Ephemeral Museum* (2017),

... [as] the fashion museum was invented in the Seventies and Eighties, for years we did the same thing: exhibitions on mannequins, devoted to fashion designers, to a theme, and that's it. For me, [I am now] looking to find other, unofficial ways of doing fashion exhibitions (cited in Foreman, 2017).

Likewise, curator De La Haye and exhibition maker Jeffrey Horsley, confront the notion of the absent body in their exhibition *Present Imperfect: Disorderly Apparel Reconfigured* (2017) at the Fashion Space Gallery, London, through the “utilisation of techniques that re-imagine, and allude to the human form, rather than recreate the body” (Daris, 2017). These examples suggest the multivalent and commanding ways in which artists and curators have used the sartorial as metonymic medium.

Nettleton points out that when the absent body is African in displays of ethnographic objects such as beadwork of they required “mediation and evidence in the form of photographic substantiation” (2017:507). Yet, when the absent body was Western, the use of abstract mannequins “presented no particular conceptual challenge to spectators,” argues media theorist Mark Sandberg (2003:3). Nettleton argues, that various forms of metonymy were used in the early ethnographic displays, evidenced in exhibition catalogues³⁷⁷ where,

... the listed pieces were referred back to photographs, also on the exhibition, of people wearing beadwork ... [serving] to establish the relationship of the objects, displayed as items distributed, detached from bodies, to the bodies of individuals who originally wore them or something similar (2017:507).

The distinctive approaches to garments in museum exhibitions across diverse disciplines informs the second key component of this chapter. The predominant approach to sartorial objects on display in ethnographic and cultural history or costume museums (both locally and globally) is to fill the object with a supporting figure that endorses and re-articulates the original ‘embodiment’ of the artefact. This filling occurs through a range of forms or reconstructed ‘bodies’ from real body casts and realistic or abstract mannequins, to rudimentary dress mounts, wireframes, soft padding or clear, hi-tech invisible supports. When sartorial object remains the primary focus, particularly in art museums, it is largely displayed without a body, either horizontally or vertically. This is a common trope when ethnographic dress artefacts are displayed as art³⁷⁸ or when *dress/fashion* objects become the artist's medium.

GHOSTING BODIES

Wilson's now seminal introduction in *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*, points to the experience of

377 Nettleton cites the 1900 Paris Exhibition catalogue's specific category ‘Class35, Objects Worn on the Person’ (2017:507).

378 Beadwork is an obvious example of this, but also aprons or blankets are often displayed as art objects, such as at the British Museum (2016) *1000 Years of South African Art*.

haunting felt at *dress/fashion* exhibitions in museums where an essential presence, body or being, is “always missing”; and the displayed artefacts are empty, affecting reminders of their owners, like the clothes of the deceased (1985:1). Hjemdahl too, describes this ghosting in sartorial exhibitions as witnessing the broken relationships between the dress/fashion objects and their previous owners or users (2014:111). Central to this chapter therefore, is the way in which this ‘broken relationship’ is reconfigured across the three museums in my study. Lucy Gundry draws on the haptic recall of the self in relation to *dress/fashion* objects on display, which she terms *mirror dressing* in response to the absence of the ‘person’ that one interacts with in the material display (2015:2).

The need to fill the garments with substitute bodies in exhibitions presents the greatest challenge for *dress/fashion* curators for three far-reaching reasons: firstly the notion of historical ‘accuracy’ versus abstraction in terms of the substitute body is highly contested (see Taylor 2002, De la Haye & Clark 2008, Petrov 2012, Hjemdahl 2014); secondly, the contextualising disciplinary knowledge tropes largely determine the use and choice of mannequins in exhibitions (see Petrov 2012, Schwartz 2012, Riegels Melchior 2014, Gutierrez 2014); and, thirdly as a site of identification and communication, the choice of body substitute or mount contributes to the curatorial intent or message of the exhibition and the institution (see Horsley 2014, Wood 2016).

Although mannequins are such a familiar component of museum displays, “they are rarely the object of attention; intended not to be looked at, but to act as support for other items ... to enable a generalisation of representation and abstraction (Varutti, 2011:5–6). Sandberg argues,

... how easily spectators negotiate the complex game of oblique access to the living scene of a missing person ... to thinking of themselves as simultaneously inside and outside the world of representation, and, of the bodies on display as both convincingly present and conveniently absent (2003:3).

This leads me to the third and final consideration of the notion of representation or identity narratives made evident via the *dress/fashion* mannequins or body forms in museum displays. While mannequins, frames and casts may animate the sartorial, their configurations and entangled embodiments produce particular identities with specific subjectivities, which are chiefly determined by the museum’s dispositions, ideologies, histories, and curatorial policies and practices (Hjemdahl, 2014:109). As Clark points out, “we both are and are not those ‘made’ bodies” (de la Haye & Clark, 2008:160).

Realistic representations of ‘traditional’ indigenous identities in ethnographic museums are largely enabled via wax models, body casts, photographs or other pictorial media, yet the representations of contemporary indigenous, as well as marginal, identities are almost entirely absent from all types of museums. Julia Petrov points to this trope as a “whitewashing out the embodied markers of race in mannequins, supportive frames, and other forms that act as substitute bodies” to ensure the continuation of a privileged hegemonic aesthetic that operates in American and British museums (2012b:102). Similarly, Daniela Gutierrez interrogates the “silences and aesthetic politics of gendered and cultural stereotypes and hierarchies” as narrated and embodied in American museum exhibitions of *dress/fashion* (2014:ii). The museumification of the sartorial – the collection and display of decommodified objects – affectively reproduces normative, and dominant, gender, class, ethnic, and geopolitical hierarchies, argues Gutierrez (ibid.).

Furthermore, in “rethinking collective aesthetic experiences and practices, such that audiences might consciously engage with and perform the meaning-making processes that art and fashion both allow” the degree of public participation via fashion exhibitions could be altered (Gutierrez, 2004:ii). I have selected some of the more significant exhibitions across the three museum spaces pertinent to the presentation of the sartorial collections in this study that highlight these shared concerns of representation, aesthetic predilections, curatorial intention and identity constructions.

SARTORIAL EXHIBITIONS AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM

A CENTURY OF SPECTACLES AND BODY-CASTS

As early as 1835, upon his return to London, the first director of the museum Smith showcased a part of his extensive personal collection in an exhibition titled *The South African Museum* in London. This was one year after the celebrated traveller Andrew Steedman's popular London exhibition, *African Glen* (Dell, 1994:240–242). Eight life-size models of 'four principal Native races' were used in one, or both, of these exhibitions (Dell, 1994:242). Although originally purported to be figures modelled in England for Steedman, from designs by Charles Davidson Bell, Dell argues

... that it is far more likely that the figures were modelled for Smith ... [and which] were quite probably the eight 'Models of the Natives of South Africa', later sold at the auction of the South African Museum and described in the sale catalogue of J C & S Stevens, 6 June 1838. In their full costume, these represented an 'Amakosa' man and woman, she grinding corn, a 'Bechuana' man, a 'Bashootoo' man and woman, an 'Amazooloo' man in his war dress and a 'Bushman' and 'Bushwoman' (1994:242).

This visual presentation of 'models' dressed in full costume, as ethnographic spectacle, was extremely popular at international fairs such as the Egyptian Hall (1847) and the Great Exhibition (1851)³⁷⁹ both in London, and the Universal Exposition (1855) in Paris (Dell, 1994:233). The displays were developed to include body-casts and live models that enabled "a sense of making present, the 'savage' body ... [and] provided authentic evidence of the diversity, curiosity and spectacle of the cultures in the colonies" (Dell, 1994:234). Showcasing collected ethnographic artefacts as 'objects of the Empire' demonstrated the "alleged distance of the societies that produced them, from the progress symbolised by the imperial modernism of the museum in which they were displayed" (Mackenzie, 2009:4). The relationship between realistic body casts and live models and the material cultures of indigenous 'others' was thus fixed and entrenched in museums both in³⁸⁰ and about the colonies in the nineteenth century (Baglo, 2015:49).

It was in 1855, the first year of Layard's almost twenty years as director at the South African Museum, that the arrival and eager reception of 'a group of figures' was described in the Trustees Report,

... the valuable group, the size of life, preserved so liberally by J van Reenen, Esq. of Constantia, will afford an excellent idea of the characteristics of the four principal races – the Kafir, Basuto, Hottentot and Bushman – and a convenient mode of displaying the clothing and ornaments with which they usually adorn, or encumber, their persons (SAM Report 1855:3).

Dell argues that these were the same Steedman-Smith casts shown in London two decades earlier (1994:240). In his first display of ethnographic items in the South African Museum, Layard describes the casts as, "wonderful specimens of savage ingenuity" (Summers, 1975:30). His account of the exhibition explains how,

... the general Miscellaneous Collection of Articles of Human Manufacture included various implements of war and the chase against one wall; the Bushmen Bows, Arrows and Quivers were arranged along a second wall; and, in the centre of the room, eight life-sized figures representing the four Principle Tribes of South Africa awaiting appropriate clothing as [they will] exhibit native dress better than any other method (SAM Archives Government Notice No 24,

379 "Ethnographic models represented South Africa at the Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace in 1851: a group of Zulus – six men, a woman and a baby – all evidently body casts; and, a 'live' Bushman group – two clothed Bushman adults and some children" (Dell, 1994:239).

380 This would include Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, and Asia (Mackenzie, 2009).

Whilst the museum report mentions the importance of the pending clothing, Layard was “prepared to display them unclothed despite the view of them as appropriate clothes-hangers” (Dell, 1994:242). The figures were eventually dressed late in 1857, after an appeal by Layard for assistance, and purchases made by the museum, of extra items to dress the figures (Dell, 1994:242–243).³⁸¹

Clark and de la Haye point out that, while traditional clothing from around the world – often worn by living people – was shown within pavilions devoted to ‘other’ countries and cultures, contemporary fashion was shown at the Paris International Exhibitions (1900) in a large fashion hall, the Pavillon de la Mode, divided into four themes (2014:11). In addition, about thirty tableaux including reproduction historical garments commissioned especially for the exhibition were displayed on life-sized wax figures at the Palais du Costume (2014:14).

It was around 1900, that the South African Museum would intensify their efforts to cast, frame and display the indigenous body for public viewing; a practice that would continue throughout the twentieth century. Museum director Peringuey initiated a body-casting project with museum modeller James Drury in 1907, framed as scientific investigations of identity and anthropometry.³⁸² It was never intended for display, yet became the key twentieth-century exhibit of the museum (Davison (2001:4). By 1909 a room “opened for ‘Native Races’, which included seventeen life-size figures and eight busts, as well as enlarged photographs of Bushmen taken in the 1870s” (SAM Report 1909 in Dell, 1994:247).³⁸³ Between 1907 and 1924, Drury cast sixty-eight full bodies of ‘pure Bushmen Specimens’ (ibid.). Shaw largely maintained, “with one or two exceptions the figures are not dressed as they are considered to be mainly of anthropological rather than ethnographical importance” (SAM *Bulletin*, 1941:161 cited in Cedras, 2016:53). The biography of the cast³⁸⁴ of Janikie Achterdam for example, reflects this objectification, as Achterdam’s cast appeared in numerous displays from 1911 to 2001 during which time, she was mostly displayed naked (Cedras 2016:51).

A field photograph of Achterdam showed her wearing patched Western clothes and strings of ostrich eggshell beadwork in front of her homestead in Prieska in 1911 (Cedras, 2016:52). Cedras argues that, “the museum stripped the inhabitants of Prieska of their social and economic context”, in other words their contemporaneity was removed to allow the museum displays the effect of timelessness (ibid.). A further example of the constructedness of the notion of ‘primitive nakedness’, is offered by erstwhile museum director Davison, who reflected on the faithful reproduction by Drury in his painting of the life-casts, where he “carefully replicated the colours of the skin, sun-tanned around conspicuously Western Clothing” (Davison, 1997:7).

Anthropologist Aaron Glass, highlights the collusion of taxidermy practices in “recontextualising and re-framing bodies as ‘specimens’ for anthropological or scientific consumption, and thus for continued colonial domination” (2010:2). Glass describes the “casual juxtaposition of Native [American Indian] objects, and bodies with stuffed animals in a classic conflation of the ‘natural’ with the ‘Aboriginal’ ... a deliberate museological

381 There are no collection acquisitions records from the 1850s that reflect these acquisitions of clothing, whether as collection items or for display purposes.

382 Although Peringuey’s primary field was archaeology, his main contribution to the museum’s development, was his drive to “organise this measurement, casting and photographing of living persons, as well as [his] fervent collection of skeletal material in particular that of the Bushman, [in] an ambitious attempt to freeze ‘savage’ South Africa in plaster, for posterity, whilst using the medium which apparently presented the greatest objectivity” (Dell 1994:247).

383 Director at the Transvaal Museum, Dr Gunning (1896–1913) followed a similar trajectory of ‘salvage’ with a similar active encouragement of the collection of ethnographic material, arguing for the urgency of their preservation (Dell, 1994:222–223).

384 Cedras traced the lives of these body casts as they moved from scientific object, to cultural curiosity, to exhibition and tourist attraction, to exemplars of problematic display politics, and eventually to silence through their removal from the public domain (2016:10).

[blurring of boundaries between] stuffed animals, human mannequins and artifacts" (ibid).³⁸⁵ Life-casts, realistic models and dioramas are both peculiar and potent tools for representation, as well as objects "apprehended, not only visually but also through feelings of proprioception" (Varutti, 2011:9). These life-casts, and dioramas also formed part of a larger political narrative, as these individuals were staged in displays with taxidermied animals in the adjacent galleries in the South African Museum, a natural history museum.

In 1932, in preparation of the re-opening of a new ethnology gallery Shaw re-arranged the ground and upper floor galleries of the museum, dividing the display in two themes: 'crafts' and 'domestic', the latter including beadwork, clothing, aprons, cloaks, shields and domestic utensils set to specific tribal groups, with the mostly naked life-casts placed (in groups) in three large glass cases arranged in the centre of the gallery (Cedras, 2015: 46–47). These exhibits, unmoved by time and modernity, only received minor modifications up till the 1950s, with the adding of cloaks and aprons to "update the outmoded ethnographic displays" (Summers, 1975:186).

In 1959, the construction of the Bushman Diorama was heralded as "the first step towards a completely new ethnographic display in newly designated cases ... [where] the Drury figures have been used to very good effect" (*SAM Annals*, 1969–1979: 205–208). The diorama, life group or habitat room was "anthropology's attempt to create a functional or contextual setting for its specimens", introduced in biology and further developed as period rooms in history and art museums (Bouquet, 2012:127). Anne Schweizer, appointed the first specialist display artist at the South African Museum, contributed towards the reptile gallery, the bird gallery, and the first Diorama in the 1950s; the design of which was loosely based on Samuel Daniel's aquatint titled, *Bosjesman frying locusts* (1804–5) (Summers 1975:204).

The Diorama showed fourteen life-casts, with Achterdam's cast placed centrally. While the other female figures had small frontal aprons, Achterdam remained unclothed until the mid-eighties (Cedras, 2016:75). The Diorama, used to show the "different ways of life of indigenous people of southern Africa ... through their material culture" (Summers, 1975:206), was so popular that a second diorama was opened in 1971, which initiated a revival in body casting. Life-casts were also made of 'Sotho', 'Xhosa' and 'Zulu' people³⁸⁶ to facilitate the development of additional ethnographic displays – these body-casts were key to the development the exhibition in *The Ethnogallery*, which opened in 1978. The display of South African material culture followed what Annie Coombes describes as,

... the rhetorical and exhibitionary devices by which a variety ... of obsessively repeated characters were made to stand in for the multiplicity of cultures comprising the African continent ... [and] a series of well-worn tropes ... sanctioned objectivity through their association with emergent disciplines (1994:63–64).

The understanding and presentation of African sartorial objects as static and 'traditional', affirmed by the persistent divisions of 'dress' and 'fashion' in museums, meant that the conceptual frameworks that underpinned the anthropological display of material cultures, in particular the exhibition of sartorial identities, in the 1970s remained largely unchanged and unchallenged for several decades.

385 The persistence of these 'primitive culture' narratives in museums, prompted Latino performance artists Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gomez-Pena to expose themselves to public scrutiny in their Guatinaui World tour in 1992. Scantily clad, like exhibits in a diorama, they "lived in a gold cage for three days, presenting ourselves as undiscovered Amerindians" – a performance that went along with fictions of discontinuity still common to many museums (Taylor, 2003:65–66).

386 As then museum ethnographer, Davison was involved in the coordination of these additional casts, made from body parts only, namely faces, hands and feet, and "these were negotiated, paid for, and consensual". They were not accessioned as objects as was the case with the earlier casting project, nor measured as part of a scientific record; their prime function claims Davison was for the development of authenticity in the displays of material culture. Davison, personal interview, 25/09/15.

SLOW PROGRESS: DISAVOWALS, DILEMMAS AND DECOLONISING

In 1989, ten years after the opening of *The Ethnogallery*, then anthropology curator, Davison created a small documentary display *About the diorama* to “provide viewers with a wider frame of reference, and to draw attention to current debates about ethnographic representation” (1992:13). However, Davison later admits that her “attempt to raise awareness of museum practice and to stimulate critical response to the diorama through the display ‘about the diorama’ seems to have been largely, although not entirely, unsuccessful” (1992:16). Similar interventions were introduced at other museums,³⁸⁷ as well as various forms of institutional self-critique during the early 1990s.

These changes reflected the need for the critical re-contextualisation of the collections, collecting practices and selected objects on display.³⁸⁸ These ‘dilemma labels’ became a feature of many South African museums around 1994, signalling the need, or intent to alter the displays (or that such changes were in process) (Witz, 2010: 1). Nowhere were these more extensively used, argues Witz, than at the South African Museum’s Diorama and *Ethnogallery*, the most permanent of which³⁸⁹ asked viewers to consider whether displays and labels in the gallery contributed towards, or perpetuated ethnic and racialised stereotypes:

Out of Touch?

This gallery was constructed in the 1970s and since that time approaches to exhibiting African cultures have changed.

Do the exhibits create the impression that all black South Africans live in rural villages, wear traditional dress and use only hand-made tools?

What about those people who live and work in towns and travel abroad or become industrialists? Do they not challenge the conventional ethnic stereotypes?

African culture is not static. Why, then, are many labels in the gallery written in the present tense, as if time had stood still?

The Diorama was the centre of heated debates following the first democratic elections in South Africa. With mounting pressure to act, then chief executive officer Jack Lohman announced the closing of the Diorama after forty-two years, citing a number of reasons for the decision that included the museum’s expressed intentions to transform, as well as debates reflecting on both the objectivity of the display and the subjectivities of those on display, and questions of voyeurism, stereotype and cliché (Cedras, 2014:116). However, Mona Hendricks, in her examination of the remaking of /Xam narratives in post-apartheid South Africa, argues that the closure of the Diorama,

... was a production on the part of the South African Museum to affect its ‘window dressing’ regarding change and transformation. It was strategic for [museum director] Lohman and other staff to tell this particular narrative of transforming the museum’s displays, exhibitions, internal structures and collections ... fitting into the grander, national narratives of post-apartheid museums in South Africa (2010:33).

387 The Natal Museum introduced a range of interventions to “counter the hegemonic whiteness on display, including photographs of African urban history, transport and sport, as well as the work of Zulu artists and “a display of traditional Zulu dresses” (Rodehn, 2011:287).

388 The South African Museum’s Department of Ethnology was renamed to the Department of African Studies & Anthropology in 1991 as the “problem with ethnology was that it is conceptually linked to ethnicity and ethnology, [and the renaming indicated] a move towards broader studies of contemporary complex societies (Klinghardt, 1991).

389 This ‘dilemma label’, a temporary six-month intervention installed in 1993 by anthropology student Bryan Krafchik, remained in place until the gallery was dismantled in 2017. Aimed at countering the problematic notion of the ‘frozen cultures’ on display, the five-panel intervention together with a series “of seemingly random photographs” attempted to offer visitors alternative ‘viewpoints’, while also inviting responses (Cedras, 2015:93). The intervention explains Davison, hoped to address issues of both authority (‘can the museum be saying this?’), and authorship (‘whose voice is being supported or promoted?’) in terms of the presentation of indigenous material cultures in a changing socio-political dynamic. Davison, personal interview, 25/09/15.

A further twelve years though would pass before the rest of the body-casts used in the display of the museum's material cultural artefacts in *The Ethnogallery* were removed. This act of removal, conversely did not receive the press attention of the closure of the Diorama.³⁹⁰ On a visit to the gallery on 22 July 2013, Cedras discovered that,

... some of the figures and artefacts had been removed, and slowly but surely, more of the figures began to disappear. By 25 October 2013, I discovered that not only had all the life-casts been removed but they also had been replaced with life-sized wire figures – styled like the typical wire sculptures seen locally in street art (2016:118).

Cedras describes the careful removal of clothing and other items, the haunting disassembling of the body-casts, and the re-dressing of the new wire figures with the same sartorial objects, and in the same manner as before, via a series of detailed photographs supplied by Iziko Natural History Archive's Archaeology Unit (2016:120–128). Klinghardt expressed that it was the museum's decision to “ensure that the exhibition continued uninterrupted, and that it didn't lose any display details”.³⁹¹

There are no records of the ‘revamping’ of *The Ethnogallery* in the Iziko Annual Reports of 2012/13 and 2013/14; namely, what costs may have been involved; what planning and logistics decisions were made; who was involved in the execution of the removal of the casts; and who authorised the design of the replacement figures.³⁹² Iziko Museums exhibitions assistant Fatima February³⁹³ suggested that there was a well-established, institutional relationship with wire worker, Winston Langwane, one of three partners who in 2000 established StreetWires, a tourist-art manufacturer.³⁹⁴ StreetWires however had not received the commission, which suggests that a private arrangement may have been made between Langwane and the museum. It is these dressed, wire sculpture figures that I encountered at *The Ethnogallery* during my research visits between 2014 and 2017.

THE ETHNOGALLERY

In 2014 I first visited the dimly lit gallery in the far-left section of the ground floor of the South African Museum, where the small gallery sign, *The Ethnogallery* hung above the entrance.³⁹⁵ The display followed “divisions set out by Van Warmelo's *Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa* (1935), and was structured on the principles of ethnic difference” (Liebhammer, 2011:49). At the time of my visit, the exhibition had for almost half a century, presented a practically unchanged display of

... seven distinctly differentiated cultural groups, namely Nama, San, South Sotho, Tswana, Lobedu, Southern Nguni or Xhosa and Zulu, using life-casts that were clothed with traditional dress and adornments [and participating in] acts of weaving, beading, dancing, or playing musical instruments (Cedras 2015:104).

This rendered a narrow and limited series of South African sartorialities as ‘ethnically’ distinct, materially timeless, and culturally fixed. Upon entering the gallery, the dilemma labels (described above), three

390 Cedras notes the rather clandestine quality of the process of removing the body-casts throughout gallery over a period of about four months. An initial inquiry in 2012 with regards an onsite intervention, Cedras observed an “added urgency to re-evaluate the ethnographic displays”, told to wait until mid-2013, eventually receiving approval “to do something in 2014, after our own team have made some adjustments to the display” (2016:118).

391 Klinghardt, personal interview, 29/10/15.

392 A museum intervention *With and Without Time*, curated by Lalou Meltzer and Klinghardt, in the Ethnogallery in 2013 was included in the Annual Report (2013/14:134), as well as descriptions of renovations involved in *The Courtyard Project*, which mentioned movement in, and closure of, certain museum areas (2013/14:124).

393 Fatima February, personal interview, 26/10/15.

394 I visited StreetWires, yet failed to establish who was involved in the development of the designs and the details of any recent contract with the museum. StreetWires studio visit, 29/10/15.

395 I first visited the gallery in November 2014 and I returned six times over the next two years.

unoccupied chairs spread around the gallery and the chill of a noisy air-conditioner greeted the visitor. The journey through the gallery began with the 'impressive warrior' mythology of the 'Zulu' tribe on the immediate left, followed by the 'Xhosa' tribe that included a full-sized, male wire mannequin and a seated woman's figure. Displays of decontextualised 'Xhosa' beadwork as decorative specimens were arranged on the back panels, while the figures in the cabinets were each dressed in 'traditional' fashions. The wall text however offered no details of the actual items being worn, or on display within the cabinet; instead the text described 'Xhosa Clothing' as follows:

Before the advent of woven cloth all clothing was made of skins of wild or domestic animals. Leopard skin was reserved for royalty. In the past there were marked differences between the western tribes and those in the east and differences still exist in the tribal fashions today (Xhosa Clothing wall text, excerpt).

The disconnect between the content of wall texts, and the items on display was repeated in another text describing the 'changing fashions' of 'Xhosa Men's Clothing' as follows:

The most important garment throughout was the skin penis-sheath, which continued in use until modern times. With this a short hide cloak was worn for warmth or when away from home. Sandals were worn only on a journey. Xhosa and Thembu men dressed their hair in fancy styles while Mpondo, Xesibe and Bhaca wore a wax head-ring as well as styling the hair. Men's clothing began to change rapidly after contact with white people. A blanket replaced the skin-cloak; trousers or a loincloth were added, the latter particularly in the east; and a cloth headband, a crocheted woollen cap, or later a felt hat was worn on the head (Xhosa Men's Clothing wall text, excerpt).

Not one of the items in this detailed description of men's clothing offered in the wall text, was on display: no penis-sheath,³⁹⁶ hide cloak,³⁹⁷ sandals,³⁹⁸ head-ring,³⁹⁹ blanket,⁴⁰⁰ trousers,⁴⁰¹ loincloth,⁴⁰² crochet woollen cap or felt hat.⁴⁰³ Yet, many of these objects are in the collections. The plain trousers worn as everyday dress (in the description above) were however not collected by the South African Museum,⁴⁰⁴ whilst the beaded trousers discussed in detail in the previous chapters, were only accessioned twenty years after the installation of the exhibition.

A further contradiction evident in this 'timeless' display of unchanging 'tribal fashions', were the many references to time (noted in the two wall texts quoted above, as well as others in the exhibition), with words such as 'before', 'in the past', 'after', 'today', 'modern times', 'after contact' and 'later'. Henrietta Riegel argues how ethnographic museums internationally, perpetuated the distinction between history and culture by acting as "sites for history lessons that relegate other cultures to an unspecified and timeless past, even when these 'groups' exist in the present" (1996:88). This effect of distancing was reiterated by the joint use of 'tribal', 'fashions' and 'today' where the combination 'tribal fashions today' neutralised the potential agency that the term 'fashion' may have suggested – as something that is changing, modern, and innovative – while the 'tribal' relegated the objects to being 'outside' of time.

396 There are almost thirty penis sheaths in the collection with almost all collected before 1978.

397 Hide cloaks from the Eastern Cape total almost thirty in the SAM collection.

398 The sandals and footwear in the SAM collection are largely of San, Bushmen or Herero origins.

399 Head-rings were popular items and were eagerly collected together with other beadwork throughout the early twentieth century.

400 Two blankets were purchased on a field trip in 1974, SAM10519 and SAM10520.

401 SAM11425 is the first pair of trousers was purchased by the SAM in 1978 as part of a SAM expedition.

402 There are three loincloths in the collection that were collected in the early twentieth century, namely SAM1010, SAM5586, and SAM12931.

403 Almost twenty-five woollen or felt caps were in the collection, mostly acquired between the 1960s and 1980s.

404 I discuss in detail the plain khaki trousers in the display of 'Sotho' cabinet below.

The notion of allochronism used in museums systematically placed the referents of anthropology “in a time other than the present of the producer of the anthropological discourse” (Fabian 1983:31, cited in Riegel, 1996:88). The repetitive framing of notions of agency and innovation – that change occurred ‘after contact with white people’ – as distinguishing indigenous *dress/fashion* practices from a notion of western contemporaneity or modernity, relegated these identities instead to the ‘primitive’. As Hamilton and Leibhammer have argued that “domain[s] marked out as tribal and traditional and sharply distinguished from modernity, [were] ... denied a changing history and an archive and endowed instead with timeless culture” (2016:14).

In the South ‘Sotho’ cabinet, a seated ‘barefoot’ wire mannequin was depicted making a hat, wearing a classic ‘Basotho’ blanket,⁴⁰⁵ plain khaki coloured trousers and a ‘Basotho’ hat. As noted elsewhere, the wall texts neither referred to the wearing of the hat, blanket or trousers, nor to the fact that wearer was barefoot. The Ethnogallery’s Display Folder includes edits of the final wall texts, as well as lists of all the objects in the cabinets with accession numbers, store locations and short, bilingual descriptions prepared for the exhibition.⁴⁰⁶ One item in the ‘Sotho’ cabinet was not accounted for; namely the pair of khaki trousers.⁴⁰⁷ The folder also contains a series of photographs⁴⁰⁸ of the making of the body-cast of Archie Khusu.⁴⁰⁹ A retrospective note, signed by Klinghardt, confirms that according to Shaw, Khusu was consulted, fairly paid and “delighted with the figure ... [requesting] eight photographs of it to send to his relatives”.⁴¹⁰

My enquiry into the provenance of the trousers on display⁴¹¹ resulted in response from Klinghardt that, “the trousers are not accessioned, and are an unregistered display prop dating from when the display was installed,” supported with an additional recommendation that, “given that age, they are probably worth accessioning as an example, if there is nothing similar from the 1970s in the clothing collection.”⁴¹² That these trousers would not necessarily ‘fit’ in the anthropology collection, and that they rather be accessioned into the Cultural History Museum’s ‘clothing’ collection, indicates the ongoing, deep disciplinary divides present in the museum.

Klinghardt and then museum director Davison argued in 1997 however that, “people read exhibits and everyday things in terms of their own knowledge, preconceptions and expectations despite the material stability of objects” (1997:191). However, these un-accessioned, Western trousers (clearly not authentic or traditional) remained part of a permanent display about ‘tribal’ *dress/fashion* identities for almost forty years. Davison and Klinghardt claimed that,

... [via the] curatorial processes of classification that ascribed meanings to collections [objects were] transformed into material archives. Issues of inclusion and exclusion, of naming and classifying, are essential to the [construction] of authenticity in the museum domain (1997:182).

Furthermore, exhibitionary tropes normalise the presence of decontextualised ethnographic objects “severed from their original sites” (Caro, 2010:108). Caro argues that,

... these objects [were] exhibited in museums in such a way that their displacement [was]

405 A small label identifies the blanket as ‘blanket or cloak’.

406 Although terms used to name the objects were specific to the language of origin, the wall texts and object descriptions were only in English and Afrikaans, as was common practice at other museums in the apartheid era, as well as institutions like media, education, and television.

407 I will return to this pair of trousers in detail in the readings that follow.

408 The colour photographs showed the seated, dressed body-cast together with Khusu, and a black-and-white photograph showed the body-cast in the final museum installation.

409 Archie Khusu, a chef at the Fairmead Private Hotel, Rondebosch. Handwritten note: *Information re. Archie from E. M. Shaw (1996)*.

410 Handwritten note: *Information re. Archie from E. M. Shaw (1996)*.

411 This forms a separate section in the Card Catalogue Cabinet of the Anthropology Collection, containing around thirty ‘unregistered display material’ items. The trousers however, were not recorded.

412 Klinghardt, email correspondence, 05/04/16.

not highlighted, so they [could] fit with the constructed narrative by which they reified history, indexing another place and time (2010:108).

In addition, the continued display of body-casts, static material culture ‘traditions’ and ‘tribal’ divisions in an exhibition – already deemed racist, ‘out of touch’ and problematic in the 1990s – for almost two decades after the fall of apartheid, attests to the depth of coloniality still present in the constitution of museums in the twenty-first century.⁴¹³ Beginning in early 2015, student protests at the University of Cape Town, aimed at questioning the legacies of colonialism and apartheid in institutions such as universities, set in motion a range of critical events,⁴¹⁴ actions⁴¹⁵ and changes that would have far-reaching effects. Sociology student activist Wandile Kasibe, who played a pivotal role in the protests,⁴¹⁶ joined Iziko Museums in 2017 as curator and public programme officer. Key to the student-led movements was a heightened attention to notions of coloniality still prominent within institutions such as universities and their curricula, as well as museums and public memorials (Xaba, 2017). As a result, the mounting agitation of decolonial activism and the call for decolonising colonial knowledge spaces such as Iziko Museums became urgent and unavoidable.

In August 2017, Iziko Museums chief executive officer Rooksana Omar announced the decision to dismantle the exhibition, finally recognising that *The Ethnogallery* was both ‘outdated’ and ‘out of touch’, and that “the Ethnography Hall at the Iziko South African Museum would close as from 15 September 2017” (Omar, 2017). Three days before its final closure, a performance-intervention *Curating the Colonial Crime Scene* – coordinated and conceptualised by Kasibe and visiting curator Kara Blackmore – was held at the museum, that Omar described as,

... a cleansing and re-dedication ceremony with prayers of repentance, sanctification and forgiveness observed from various traditional groups including the Kei Korana, Khoesan and Nguni (2017).

Singer Babalwa Makwetu – dressed in a girl’s uniform of white shirt and socks, dark maroon school dress and black school shoes and cloaked in a black bedspread decorated with buttons – was joined by performance artist Lulamile Nikani – dressed in a shell-clad, deconstructed, spattered and shredded western suit, covered in a large fishing net dragging bits of flotsam and jetsam across the pavement⁴¹⁷ – at the entrance of the South African Museum. Nikani was painted white – a ghostly and haunting “old man who comes from a distant past, caught between times and histories [who] cannot rest; he is haunted. He has come to bear witness to the colonial crime scene”.⁴¹⁸ Curator Blackmore described these colonial crimes as “the seepages of historical trauma into the contemporary” (2018). Museum theorist Iain Chambers describes how the symbolic “troubling debris of the past ...[will] exceed the museums that historically sought to systemise, pacify and ultimately silence this inheritance” (2014:242).

Director Mandla Mbothwe’s *Curating the Colonial Crime Scene* invited audience participation⁴¹⁹ in terms of a ‘re-looking’ or re-awakening as a critical investigation to see the ethnographic collections for what they

413 Further influences such as institutional and financial limitations would compound the situation. However, the stasis does draw attention to the perseverance of coloniality.

414 This centred largely on the removal of Cecil John Rhodes statue from the University, 2016.

415 Reorganising as the national student movement #FeesMustFall (#FMF), protesters closed university campuses around the country in late-2015, and again in 2016, demanding the provision of free countrywide tertiary education (Gasa & Dougan, 2016).

416 Kasibe co-curated *Echoing Voices from Within: A Rhodes Must Fall Movement Exhibition* at the Centre for African Studies Gallery (2016).

417 Produced in collaboration with Mbothwe by Leigh Bishop at the costume department of Michaelis Drama Department. Bishop, personal interview, 18/01/18.

418 Details from invitation, *Curating the Colonial Crime Scene*. Institute for Creative Arts (ICA), email correspondence, 11/09/17.

419 Makwetu and Nikani escorted the audience into *The Ethnogallery*, while inviting ancestral spirits into the ‘crime scene’. Audience members were invited to identify crimes – of abuse, shame, horror and inflicted trauma – in an effort to understand the violence of coloniality enshrined within the museum.

really are – as evidence of colonial crimes.⁴²⁰ As Dutch curator Chandra Frank asserts, we must “question which memories are included, who is served by the inclusion of those memories”, and what mis-truths remain embedded and perpetuated (2015). In the early 1970s, feminist poet Adrienne Rich writes about the need for ‘re-looking’,

... as a re-vision – an act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new direction – [that] is for us more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival (Rich, 1972:18).

In an ideal scenario suggests Blackmore, the South African Museum would “open up their archaeological and anthropological collections to contemporary artists and curators” who are willing to ‘re-look’ and challenge the violence embedded in the objects, narratives and museal practices.⁴²¹ Kasibe asks if,

... it is the systematic violence of reducing people to things, which lays the groundwork for genocide; that presents itself in the current ethnographic display of personal effects, cultural objects and at some point body casts? Is this in fact evidence of a “Colonial Crime Scene” that now requires a rigorous “de-colonial” investigation? (2017).

To subvert the hegemonic constructs sustaining the crimes of ethnographic exhibitions such as *The Ethnogallery*, it is imperative to make decolonial subjectivities visible, and to acknowledge, “those dignities wounded under racial classifications, under the logic of the disposability of human life in the name of civilization and progress,” argue Mignolo and Vazquez (2013:14). Frank adds to this argument, encouraging a “decolonial aesthetics that challenges dominant notions of primitivism and ethnography that [will] influence the perception and performativity of artistic practice from the global South within museum spaces (2015). Much like Fred Wilson’s museal disruptions at the Contemporary Museum and Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore (1992–93), Yinka Shonibare’s museological critique of the lingering eurocentric and colonial aestheticisation of the ‘primitive’ in museums such as the Quai Branly,⁴²² reveal ways in which museums can be turned into “sites of contamination that are capable of including formerly repressed histories” (Ring Peterson, 2014:130).

A SUMMARY OF THE SARTORIAL EXHIBITIONS AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM

In this analysis of the display of ‘traditional’ sartorial identities over four decades in *The Ethnogallery*, and the precursor displays of dressed life-casts at the South African Museum, I illustrated four key issues made visible via the body-casts. The first concerns the persistence of the ‘timeless’ narrative that has tainted African sartorial objects, made evident in permanent museum exhibits such as *The Ethnogallery*, and largely still perpetuated globally in ethnographic museums. Ideas about ‘tradition’ and ‘tribe’ have had far-reaching effects in terms thinking about African sartoriality and historical subjectivity. The binary divisions of ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’, indigeneity and globality, and specifically in South Africa, of black and white sartorial histories and identities began with the colonial encounter, were strengthened during the apartheid era, and persevere in post-1994, South Africa.

My second observation deals with the ways in which notions of time and difference were framed within the museum as a permanent display of unchanging ‘cultures’ distanced both spatially and materially from Western

420 See invitation, Institute for Creative Arts (ICA), email correspondence, 11/09/17.

421 Ibid.

422 Anne Ring Petersen describes artist, Yinka Shonibare’s *Garden of Love* (2007), commissioned by the Quai Branly Museum in Paris – a staging of European objects in the manner of European ethnographers in an ethnographic museum – as a reversal of the gaze, to consider what it would mean to re-think European culture and its objects in an ethnographic manner (2014:134–5). In sculptural works such as *The Confession* (2007), showing two headless mannequins wearing Rococo costumes with shoes, and artificial silk flowers, Shonibare reworked the dress of the colonisers in ‘African Dutch wax’ prints, unsettling the arrogance of collecting and exhibiting the cultures of ‘others’ (Ring Peterson, 2014:127).

cultural histories. Black identities differed, and were also distanced and divided from the largely white identities of the museum practitioners and visitors. The primary mechanism involved in the staging of difference informs my third observation: the use of body-casts in ethnographic museums to display the material culture objects. Body casts intrigue and haunt museum visitors by the simultaneous presence and absence of the bodies on display. My research made evident how the scientific realism of dioramas, as well as the violence of scientific racism, coalesced in these uncanny mannequins that embodied the sartorial objects of black South Africans for almost two centuries.

My fourth observation results from the accretion of the three aspects above, namely the specific embodiment of the sartorial via the body-cast, the disciplinary influences in terms of naming and framing 'difference', and the persistence of the binary narratives that underpin the museum's exhibitions, all of which contributed to an epistemological violence enacted upon the lived subjectivities of the past, and its ongoing impact on the contemporary identity narratives of black South Africans in the present.

SARTORIAL EXHIBITIONS AT THE CULTURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

AN UNCOMFORTABLE FIT

I trace the very infrequent, and mostly temporary sartorial displays in the second museum in this study, the Cultural History Museum, over a period of almost fifty years. In this chapter I interrogate these exhibitions in an effort to understand the specific 'uncertain' relationship⁴²³ between the museum and 'fashion', between its directors and the 'textiles' department, and between the public engagement with *dress/fashion* and the institution's investments in terms of funding, research foci or curatorial efforts. Retired curator, van Delen (1985–2014) recalls that,

... since we had so little opportunity to display, I also used to try to make objects available in talks and group visits. The nature of the groups was usually white females. The groups also had to be kept quite small for security reasons.⁴²⁴

In 1971, the first sartorial exhibition was installed at the Cultural History Museum six years after its official opening in 1965. The museum was primed for participation in one of over thirty exhibitions⁴²⁵ developed for the tenth anniversary of the Republic of South Africa, the *Republic Festival/Republiek Fees 1971*. The inclusion of textiles, industry and new technologies supported the broader rubric of the Republic Festival, as a showcase of modernity, economic (and political) power, and progress. The imperative to further associations with 'fashion' clearly demarcated those wearing Western fashion racially and socially from the South African Museum's timeless, indigenous or 'tribal' dress identities.

The exhibition '*Fashion and Fabrics*': 1961–1971 was an acknowledgement of the thriving progress of a local textile industry and showed a strong emphasis on textile innovations. Although a detailed list of fashion styles, accessories and display modes was prepared for the exhibition, I found no exhibition reviews to confirm

423 Van Delen, personal interview, 14/11/14.

424 Van Delen, email correspondence, 17/12/17.

425 Seventeen exhibitions were developed for the month of celebration that included showcasing archival documents, plastic arts, photography, paintings, books industrial design and architecture – all with a focus on progress and innovation. Fifteen additional activities and displays were developed for the RSA 10 Showgrounds that included "a realistic display of subversive activities and drug evils which the Republic has been combating during the past ten years", telecommunications, fancy racing pigeons, Bibles, and a Flora Festival (RF1971 Programme). The large 'Display File' (C2/4) contained letters, press records and related ephemera, including documents relating to the conceptualisation, press, public liaison and participation for the *Fashion and Fabrics*: 1961–1971 exhibition.

the outcomes of these plans.⁴²⁶ The specially designed, fully bilingual⁴²⁷ *'Fashion and Fabrics': 1961–1971* exhibition catalogue had an introductory essay by Peggy Champion,⁴²⁸ twelve promotional pages dedicated to the exhibitors,⁴²⁹ and a further twelve pages covering a brief history of the Cape Town School of Fashion with student-driven reflections on each year in fashion of the decade 1961 to 1971.⁴³⁰

The conservative political framing of the Republic Festival informed the overall focus of the exhibitions, which included displays at various locations around Cape Town, such as *The Bible*, *Subversive Activities and Drugs*, and *The Prisoner*.⁴³¹ The representation of a docile and conservatively fashioned, white South African body in a cultural history museum was far removed from the dramatic events happening in global fashion trends that included miniskirts, gender fluid dressing, punk, and men with long hair. Rising tensions after Prime Minister H. F. Verwoerd's assassination, the outcomes of an unjust Rivonia Trial, and an increasingly bureaucratically unfair political system marked the lives of most South Africans in the early 1970s. However, South African museums, chose to ignore these politics, and instead, showcased ten years of 'progress, success, sophistication and the arts' of a new Republic of South Africa.

Despite the ongoing donations received by the museum throughout the 1960s and 1970s of Western fashion – from eighteenth-century men's waistcoats and nineteenth-century crinolines and corsets, to twentieth-century parasols and pumps – the museum's inherently conservative disposition⁴³² meant that the collection was largely ignored. Where European and American museums were embracing the dynamic, socially-rich and engaging offerings of their *dress/fashion* collections, the Cultural History Museum made every effort to distance the sartorial from the presentation of domestic history which favoured objects such as coins, weapons, glassware, furniture or stamps. This lack of institutional confidence in and support of the collection by the various museum directors⁴³³ continued throughout the twentieth century.

Although over half of the acquisitions in the first two decades of the Cultural History Museum's existence were *dress/fashion* related, there were no further dedicated exhibits – neither temporary nor permanent – developed by the museum for their largest collection. In the late 1970s there was a short collaboration with neighbouring retailer Stuttafords⁴³⁴ with a display of historic costumes in the store's atrium.⁴³⁵ Then museum director, Wolfgang Schneewind (1965–1985) was instrumental in buying many objects for the museum with "money at his disposal", yet there was no attention paid to the display of *dress/fashion* during his tenure (Linder, 1997:414).

A SINGLE EFFORT IN ALMOST FORTY YEARS AND AN UNFULFILLED PROPOSAL

In the sixteen years that passed without a single *dress/fashion* exhibition at the museum (1971–1987), a number of important, critical developments took place internationally with regards the practice of fashion

426 This included: Textile design/production; Progress in women's fashion; Progress in men's fashion; Progress in leather & fur fashion; Shoes, handbags, hosiery, gloves, hats & costume jewellery; Cosmetics & wigs; Lectures; Fashion Shows.

427 The museum recognised two 'official' languages and policy ensured that all published texts were in English and Afrikaans, as well as research publications, board meeting minutes, and wall texts.

428 Peggy Champion who worked for the South African Wool Board and the fashion magazine, *The Buyer*, describes the importance of government financial aid to industry (R45M over 10 years to the textile industry), the importance of designers, and the need for couturiers to form a syndicate.

429 These were predominantly textile manufacturers, with a few garment producers and retailers.

430 Cape Town Fashion Design School, founded in 1964 by Miss Ursula Schwittay, was a key sponsor and supporter – perhaps also advisor – in the exhibition.

431 See Republic Festival Programme notes, Exhibition File, Iziko Library.

432 I discussed the impact of this in Chapter One.

433 Only with the introduction of the museum merger in 1999, and consecutive directors Davison and Lalou Meltzer, who were interested in the social histories of objects, did the *dress/fashion* collection begin to receive some attention with the intention to engage in more complex, curatorial dialogues.

434 This was the second public fashion display that relied heavily on a commercial 'fashion' partner.

435 Due to the fragile nature of many of the historic items, they were only displayed for short periods as these were not temperature or climate controlled environments; instead open-air and prone to dust. Yet, the collaboration did not result in a parallel display opportunity of contemporary items in the museum.

curation and the importance of fashion in museums. Judith Clark and Amy de la Haye identify the impact of the special exhibition *Fashion: An Anthology by Cecil Beaton* (1971), that was held at the V&A Museum in London, in their recent publication *Exhibiting Fashion Before & After 1971* (2014). Secondly, Diana Vreeland's appointment at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute, in 1973, greatly influenced the evolution of fashion exhibition practices.⁴³⁶ Vreeland, bringing her own contemporary, fashion 'curatorial grammar' into the fashion exhibitions, curated fifteen exhibitions during her time as special consultant at the Costume Institute (1973–1987).⁴³⁷

In 1987, soon after van Delen was appointed textile curator, *En Vogue: Formal Wear/Deftige Drag: 1920–1960*⁴³⁸ opened at the Cultural History Museum, offering a "cursory glance at the fashion trends of the time warranted by the present interest in the recent past" (van Delen, 1987:2). Drawing from the museum's own collections and various loans,⁴³⁹ the exhibition showed a total of almost eighty dinner, evening, cocktail, dance and mess uniform items in the entrance foyer of the Cultural History Museum.⁴⁴⁰ The chronological *dress/fashion* exhibition – typically consisting of a "display of upper-class women's fashions, organised to show a temporal succession of styles" (Steele, 2008: 33) – formed the basis for this overview of styles, as a presentation of the fashionable modernity of the museum's collection. Hjemdahl describes these period displays as showcasing 'history', seen as a succession of identifiable periods or evolution, each expressed through a different style and "placed in a chronological and linear order" (2014:116).

Perpetuating the association of fashion to 'whiteness' and 'modernity' already evident in the museum's collection, *En Vogue: Formal Wear/Deftige Drag* reinforced the museum's politically racist, exclusion practices. A 1923 Cloverleaf Citroen, as the central display feature, together with printed posters, music⁴⁴¹ and plants procured for the duration of the exhibition,⁴⁴² created an 'appropriate' ambience of fashionability and history.⁴⁴³

The bright yellow and black Citroen also contrasted with the predominantly black evening dresses and formal menswear, with the exception of a few late fifties, bright floral cocktail dresses. The display included an evening dress with beadwork embroidery from Mrs. Powell,⁴⁴⁴ a garden party outfit by Jays Ltd. London, donated by Miss Hogan,⁴⁴⁵ and further outfits donated by, amongst others Mr. and Mrs. Watson, Mrs. Spilhaus and Miss Goodkind. Their contact details were carefully noted in pencil on a list of all relevant donations received by the museum.⁴⁴⁶ The details were separately collated "for the personal invitation by the museum director, A P Roux", which began:

Dear _____

We are very pleased to announce that for the first time in many years, selected costumes will be on display at the Museum for a limited period. ⁴⁴⁷

436 A second book by Judith Clark, together with Maria Luisa Frisa on fashion curation, looks at the influence of Ms Vreeland. *Diana Vreeland after Diana Vreeland* (2012).

437 See also Steele (2008), Hjemdahl (2014) and Teunissen (2014).

438 The catalogue was fully bilingual, offering all information in English and Afrikaans.

439 The catalogue provides a list of approximately thirty individuals who provided items for display, and invitations and further documents in the Display File (C2/12/1) refer to a number of the loans.

440 The double-volume foyer of the museum facilitated an immersive display with space to wander around the car and through the installation.

441 Mr. Sargaent provided a large selection of 1920s music, which the attendants needed to manage, both in terms of the maintenance of a comfortable volume, and variety. See *Note to Attendants* (Display File C2/12/1). Sargaent was in the finance department. Van Delen, interview, 10/07/15.

442 See *Notes to Attendants*, and letter of request for hiring of "15–20 palms and wild bananas" from the Department of Public Works and Land Affairs, dated August 1987 (Display File, C2/12/1).

443 Hjemdahl notes how display technologies "also produced a sense of time and a certain understanding of history" (2014:115).

444 SACHM70/100

445 SACHM71/288

446 See Display File (C2/12/1).

447 Ibid.

Evidence of the exhibition's development began with van Delen's request addressed to Display Scenes⁴⁴⁸ for "a quote for the hiring and purchase of appropriate mannequins to be used in exhibiting a range of formal evening, cocktail and dancewear dresses and suits", followed by a further request that, "the appearance of the dummy stands and colour of the dummies" would require attention.⁴⁴⁹ Van Delen recalls that two factors led to the choice of 'white' for the mannequins, firstly to unify the various mannequins by a single colour, and secondly, to provide a neutral, yet effective backdrop for the dresses, rather than any overriding political intention of 'whiteness'.⁴⁵⁰

The Cultural History Museum was not alone, however in the privileging of showcasing 'whiteness' in the museum as Cecelia Rodehn points out in her thesis, *Displaying Anglophile Whiteness: A Case-Study of a South African Exhibition* (2011). The incorporation of "one male and two female white mannequins in the period rooms in the mid-eighties *The History Hall* exhibition"⁴⁵¹ contributed to, and reinforced the invisibility of 'blackness', and furthermore strengthened "the perception of hegemonic and heterogeneous whiteness in the narrative of the domestic, urban material culture on display" (2011:285–286).⁴⁵²

Not only were the mannequins 'white', but the choice of the 1950s, European mannequins further underpinned the notion of an imagined, Eurocentric docile femininity for an exhibition reflecting class, decorum and sophistication, far removed from the assertive, confident and athletic bodies of 1980s mannequins popular in fashion retailers and international museum exhibitions,⁴⁵³ and far removed from the surrounding and escalating, political unrest beyond the walls the museum. Dress historian Lou Taylor argues that the stylisation of mannequins for the display of *dress/fashion* in museums must follow the fashionable paradigms of the era in focus and an understanding of the changing bodily ideals was key to historical sartorial accuracy (2002:34).

The choice of mid-century mannequins for the exhibition *En Vogue: Formal wear/Deftige Drag* neither reflected the historical accuracy of many of the dresses on display (an exhibition that spanned five decades), nor the contemporary context of the viewer. That *dress/fashion* exhibitions could articulate historical narratives as well as contemporary, conceptual or thematic concerns was becoming more common in exhibitions. Petrov points to the late twentieth century slippage between the white cube's conceptual approaches and the more conventional period-room approaches as "historical fashions were set out according to aesthetic considerations, both of the period of their origin, and of the period when the display was staged" (2012:176).

Van Delen had joined the museum in the same year that Anton Roux was appointed director. Roux (1985–1998) recognised for his conservative ideologies, "knew and cared very little about the textiles collection" and largely marginalised the collection, as well as any proposals or curatorial opportunities. Following the very brief display of twentieth century fashion in *En Vogue*, van Delen was principally tasked with packing and unpacking the collection a number of times, organising and cataloguing the collection, and on occasion leading special tours in the archives. However, with surrounding political tensions, and a growing public awareness of the irrelevance of a white, Eurocentric cultural history collection, van Delen's confidence in the costume collection diminished.⁴⁵⁴ Largely influenced by the 1978 publication *Fashion and Anti-fashion* by Ted Polhemus and Lynn Proctor, van Delen however still prepared an extensive exhibition proposal in the mid-1990s. It would draw objects from the collection, together with items from the South African Museum and National Gallery to

448 Display Scenes still supply mannequins to the fashion retail industry, but have moved premises from Roeland Street, and have lost all records of products, samples and stockists from the 1980s. Telephonic and email correspondence, 6–27/07/15.

449 Correspondence 06–09 April 1987. See Display File (C2/12/1).

450 Van Delen, personal interview, 10/07/15.

451 The exhibition in question is *The History Hall* exhibition at the Kwa-Zulu Natal Museum.

452 In response to the absence the black representation in museum exhibitions, African-American artist Fred Wilson posed black mannequins in museum security uniforms on a display platform titled *Guarded View* (1991) at the Whitney Museum of American Art as a "reminder of the invisibility of people of colour in museums giving a 'voice' to those left out of the museum's historical narratives and restoring their identities" (Corrin, 1994:9).

453 See Thesander (1997:95–98).

454 Van Delen, personal interview, 22/12/17.

facilitate new cross-cultural understandings.⁴⁵⁵

The proposed exhibition was thematically devised to both include, and trouble notions of ‘beauty’, ‘shame-modesty’, ‘uniformity-individualism’, ‘protection’ and ‘sexuality’. Van Delen prepared information for wall texts, various image sources as visual research and for display, and the accession numbers of selected objects. For example, van Delen included the following to articulate the concept of ‘protection’:

Two aprons: A striped one belonged to a farmer’s wife, the other one was embroidered and worn by Lolotte Moodie (b. 1832).⁴⁵⁶

Fireman’s uniform: Made of wool, presented by Cape Town Fire and Rescue⁴⁵⁷

Overalls: Possibly used by a painter, 1907. Presented by the Spillhaus family⁴⁵⁸

Other: Mr. Immelman’s safari suit, a bathing cap, a Zulu warrior’s shield⁴⁵⁹

While the proposal articulated a requisite response to the museum’s dilemma in terms of its colonially tainted collections and the pre-merger anxieties, then director, Mazel (1998–2002) rejected the proposal early in 1998. Instead of staging an exhibition that could articulate both distinct and overlapping notions shared between sartorial objects across the multiple collections, van Delen resumed another round of packing the collection, as preparation for the museum merger began. As Esmoyl explains,

... the textile collection was the first collection to be moved out in 2005 into the temporary textile storage space at the Lodge, due to the fact that this specific space had air-conditioning. [Another] move back to the restored Social History Centre, and into the newly renovated and equipped textile store commenced in 2010.⁴⁶⁰

REPEATING THE BINARIES VIA THE CURATORIAL TROPES

The Iziko Museums merger in 1999 prompted both a material and conceptual restructuring necessary to integrate the previously segregated departments, so as to “unlock the strength [contained] within the variety of museum sites and vitality of collections to weave a new and uniquely South African narrative that would embrace our interconnectedness and that of our collections” (Rassool, 2013:9). It was necessary that an exhibition was required that would position the Cultural History Museum collection, within the newly configured Iziko Museums Social History Collections, in such a way that the collection articulated and reflected diversity, complexity and multiculturalism more effectively.

Almost four years in the making, *The IsiShweshwe Story: material women?* opened in the refurbished *Textile Gallery* at the Slave Lodge Museum (formerly the Cultural History Museum) in 2013.⁴⁶¹ The exhibition showed a collection of distinctive blue-and-white, brown-and-white, or red-and-white discharge-printed, patterned textiles,⁴⁶² namely *isiShweshwe* and its sartorial interpretations, the greater part of which was generously donated to the museum in 2012 by collector Leeb-du Toit. Staged in three small, successive galleries, the exhibition showcased the creative and cultural diversity of its uptake as an ‘iconic’ South African textile,⁴⁶³ the

455 Ibid.

456 SACHM69/28 and SACHM72/410.

457 SACHM95/296

458 SACHM95/296

459 Van Delen noted here that she would need to negotiate a loan from the South African Museum collection for this item.

460 Esmoyl, email correspondence, 02/01/18.

461 The exhibition was jointly conceptualised and curated by the Iziko Social History Collections department and Leeb-du Toit with sponsorship from the Cape Town Fashion Council, Consulate General of Germany in Cape Town, Da Gama Textiles and the National Heritage Council.

462 Also recognised by its pungent, slightly musty smell and crisp, starched handle.

463 See also Leeb-du Toit publication *Isishweshwe: A History Of The Indigenisation Of Blueprint In Southern Africa* (2017).

cloth's multicultural origins from its trade roots in Asia and Europe to South Africa, and, lastly, its multivalent forms of use in a post-apartheid South Africa. It was hoped that the exhibition would reveal,

... the interconnections and exchange of traditions between various social groups, [as well as] ignite connections via a narrative thread, of different stories embedded in the art, cultural history and anthropology collections (Rassool, 2013:13).

The isiShweshwe Story offered an opportunity to simultaneously tell the unique story of dress and community in South Africa, and frame the museum's re-imagining and re-presentation of a more integrated, and shared South African cultural history, presented by Iziko Museums via the sartorial collection.⁴⁶⁴ Yet, I am reminded of Riegels Melchior's warning that, although fashion makes museums appear relevant and appealing to contemporary society,

... [fashion exhibitions] do not necessarily make museums reflective or particularly critical, nor do they transform museums into forums for debates required to sustain and build democratic societies, generate greater visitor numbers with broader demographics, or attract diversity (2014:13).

Although a wide range of concerns emerged in relation to *The isiShweshwe Story*, for this thesis I am interrogating those made evident through the body substitutes, representations and mannequins used in the exhibition. Considering the reflective framework of Iziko Museums' transformation attempts – following firstly the imperative to promote a cross-cultural, multi-racial and interdisciplinary narrative via the exhibition, and secondly in relation to the problematic use and recent removal of the body-casts at the South African Museum – it is therefore important to note the lack of criticality shown by the curators and designers involved in the reproduction of the 'various' bodies in *The isiShweshwe Story*. Gutierrez points out that,

... mannequins reproduce politically and socially determined, and determining, relations, as viewers are positioned or displaced via the standards of beauty or ugliness, and belonging or dismissal deployed in fashion exhibitions (2014:102).

The first gallery of the exhibition showcased everyday dress in cabinets titled 'Wandering Blue Print' on the right of the gallery and a small selection of 'High Fashion' on the left. No information supported this division between 'dress' and 'fashion'. A single, full-size unlabelled catwalk photograph of a white model was used in support of the 'High Fashion' display. Across the gallery in the cabinets showing the vernacular dress however, a range of smaller, photographs of predominantly black women were included, many of who are named.⁴⁶⁵ Most of the photographs were casual portraits taken in settings that were neither 'modern' nor urban,⁴⁶⁶ compounding the binary of urban, white fashioned 'modernity' framed in the cabinet on the left, and black, rural 'tradition' in the opposite cabinets, in 'need of' supporting photographs.

Furthermore, the curators at large selected an almost exclusively feminine spectrum for the exhibition – of the almost one-hundred-and-fifty items there are only three menswear items on display.⁴⁶⁷ Selected to epitomise 'High Fashion', was a brown and white *isiShweshwe* Amanda Laird Cherry dress, shown together with five other designer dresses on mannequins and the full-size ramp photograph of a female model. Also in the Cultural History Collection, and donated by Leeb-du Toit, is a slightly faded, worn pair of Amanda Laird Cherry

464 Iziko Museums Annual Report 2012–13 (2013:10–11).

465 Underpinning the political argument of Leeb-du Toit in support of the textile's uptake by white women during apartheid, there are a few photographs included of white 'alternative' women and children wearing *isishweshwe* – again removed from the mainstream, modern narrative of fashion in the opposite cabinet.

466 The photographs are displayed randomly, dating from the early twentieth century to the late 1980's, without any indication whether the relationships between the photographs and the garments on display are causal or suggestive.

467 This included the 'San' *kaross* (see also Footnote 468), a Mandela shirt and a Patchwork jacket.

menswear shorts, also in brown and white *isiShweshwe*⁴⁶⁸ purchased at Highway Hospice Market in Hillcrest. These shorts however were not selected for display. British fashion curator Horsley describes this lack of menswear in museum collections and exhibitions as the ‘archival shadow’, with the focus of fashion mainly on the feminine (2014). My search for trousers in the museums in this study attests to this trope; namely, the fetishisation of the female form (both body and object) when dealing with fashion. I argue that the absence of items such as beaded trousers, bell-bottoms, jeans or riding pants in the museum collections and exhibitions points to larger questions of patriarchy, power and ideology at play in these regimes of knowledge.

A second concern is highlighted via the choice of cream-coloured calico body fillings used for both the high fashion artefacts and the vernacular dress items. In this way the items were linked via the light-skinned body substitute (I will return to this point below). Two *isiShweshwe* outfits (one in a circular, stand-alone glass cabinet, and the other as the first object in the vernacular dress cabinet) were however made conspicuously different via their notably other ‘re-embodiments’, namely as full, life-size, black wire figures.⁴⁶⁹ The two outfits, a Xhosa *makoti*⁴⁷⁰ and San *kaross*⁴⁷¹ were two of three ethnographic objects in the exhibition, clearly signified by the curators’ choice of embodiment as ‘other’, and in this case as authentic and ‘traditional’, separated from the political, and modern narrative of the rest of the exhibition. The third ethnographic item displayed in the second gallery – a ‘traditional’ Bushman apron with an *isiShweshwe* patchwork insert – was the only object pinned to the wall in the exhibition; a display trope common to fine art institutions for displaying ethnographic objects such as blankets, aprons and beadwork.⁴⁷²

The cream-coloured cloth body-forms, used in the rest of the exhibition included full body-shapes, and thin or even flat fillers, some with heads (although no faces), but many without. The conservation team Hendrina Brandt, Bradley Mottie, Janene van Wyk and Fatima February were involved in making recommendations for the “methods of how to best exhibit each artifact ... [claiming] that the style of each garment determined the design of the body-forms ... [and opting] for a variation in design, also to reduce costs”.⁴⁷³ The so-called ‘neutral’ calico, made from prewashed Natural Cotton, explained Mottie, follows the ICOM Costume guidelines that “ensure that there would be no acid migration from the material to the garment or object”, an important consideration in preventive conservation practices.⁴⁷⁴

Dress historians and curators in the field have so widely adopted this cream-coloured base for the display of historic costume⁴⁷⁵ that it surprised van Delen and others on the curatorial team that I considered the cream-coloured bodies as a perpetuation of notions of whiteness, and that in this exhibition, with the exception of the two black, wire figures, all the garments on display were shown on cream-coloured (white) bodies,⁴⁷⁶ regardless that the photographs in the cabinets show the dresses and outfits worn by black South Africans. Petrov similarly explores how the neutral cream colour, most often used for museum or fashion mannequins, erases any ethnic diversity that may have been present in the individuals who originally wore the clothes, whether featured or featureless, (2012b).

468 SH2012/197

469 These two wires figures were made at the same time as the figures that appeared in the reconstructed Ethnogallery (2012) and it is evident that the same artist made them. Conservator Bradley Mottie claimed, “we wanted something different, yet with a human figure, it had to be lightweight. We wanted to expose the feet and install shoes if necessary, as in the case of the rotating figure”. Bradley Mottie, email correspondence, 02/11/15.

470 Traditional wedding outfit, Xhosa origin.

471 A skin wrap is layered over with a patterned cloth with ostrich eggshell and glass beads, ‘San’ origin.

472 I will discuss this display trope in more detail later in this chapter.

473 Bradley Mottie, email correspondence, 02/11/15.

474 Ibid.

475 Hjemdahl notes that the uptake of the ‘discreet’ museum mannequin favoured by dress historians, as an aesthetically pleasing form developed at a time “where the simple and functional form was seen as an aesthetic ideal. It had nothing to do with trying to reproduce the natural body – it was primarily a technology with the purpose to support the displayed dress, give the garments [some] body, and accentuate the displayed dress – keeping the technology hidden from the public” (2014:117).

476 Even the Herero *isishweshwe* outfit is shown on a cream-coloured body (with head but not face).

Costume curator Kimberly Chrisman-Campbell alludes to her own concerns of the colour of mannequins as exhibition themes and displays “ramp up their efforts to depict diversity” (2017). Chrisman-Campbell continues,

... mannequins with realistic skin tones tend to look old-fashioned, and ‘neutral’ colours like white or pale gray often read as Caucasian – the latter an especially glaring problem in a show like the Fashion Institute of Technology’s *Black Fashion Designers* or Chicago History Museum’s *Inspiring Beauty: 50 Years of Ebony Fashion Fair*.⁴⁷⁷ In recent years, custom-made ‘floating’ forms have become popular, because they sidestep so many of the issues that mannequins pose (2017).

Curator Helen Mears, in preparation for the *Fashion Cities Africa* exhibition at the Brighton Museum (2016–2017) described their dilemma in using the Adel Rootstein mannequins donated to the museum that,

... [although] being rather taken aback by their naturalistic and ‘racialised’ features, at least they are not mono-racial (we intend to mix mannequins with African, Asian, Caucasian and Arab features). And my colleague is emphatic that the garments will look so much better on these than on the headless and limbless Stockmans⁴⁷⁸ we thought we might have to use (2016).⁴⁷⁹

In a comparable move, curators Florence Muller and Olivier Gabet opted for dark charcoal or black full-figure mannequins in the *Christian Dior: Couturier du Rêve* exhibition at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs (2017–2018) – a vast display of creative output of the House of Dior, celebrating its seventieth anniversary.⁴⁸⁰ All of the full-figure, life-size, retail-type mannequins – with heads, features and limbs – were painted either black or dark charcoal grey, with Asian, African or composite/abstract features. These presented quite a contrast to the only cream-coloured ‘bodies’ in the show – the headless and limbless Stockman dressmaker forms.⁴⁸¹ This choice of substitute bodies for the exhibition reflects the various contemporary fashion industry debates with regards diversity on the ramps, in advertising, on magazine covers, and of brand ambassadors.

The iconic photograph of the 1947 Bar suit⁴⁸² worn by a white model, featured in the exhibition’s marketing and branding, yet the garment itself, when displayed in the exhibition, was shown on a black mannequin. The insertion of a black ‘body’ into a predominantly European ‘fashion history’⁴⁸³ has relevance. Fine artists, such as Jackson and contemporary fashion collectives, for example the Sartists have ‘re-embodied’ historic dress as a means to re-imagine and re-figure the past as *inclusive*.⁴⁸⁴ Hjemdahl notes that the mannequin is an intellectual issue of interpretation and contextualisation (2014:109). Similarly, Gutierrez argues that it is through the substitute bodies used in *dress/fashion* exhibitions that particular normative identities of race, orientation and class are reproduced, and that museums are sites that “contribute to the normalisation and reproduction of hegemonic discourses on taste, style, and lifestyle that circulate in the larger social body” (2014:102–103).

477 The Italian mannequin makers Bonevari, who have supplied mannequins to museums and fashion retailers since the 1950s, have currently one range of blue mannequins, one red, one black, and more than twelve white or Caucasian models.

478 French mannequin makers Stockman, have handmade dressmakers’ forms and tailor’s dummies for 150 years for museums, designers and fashion retailers.

479 Helen Mears, email correspondence, 23/02/16.

480 Alongside the dresses, there were atelier toiles, fashion photographs, documents, illustrations, sketches, letters, notes, accessories, bags, shoes and perfume bottles, interspersed with ramp footage, short fashion films and paintings and sculptures, with pieces from the Dior Heritage collection, special loans from museums and private collections (Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 2017).

481 Carolyn Hamilton, personal communication, 27/06/17.

482 The Bar suit dubbed the New Look, attributed to Dior, 1947 as heralding in a new post WWII silhouette and reviving the French couture industry.

483 While lecturing at LISOF, Johannesburg (1998–2012), it was my imperative to draw into the curriculum notions of black, urban identities into both South African sartorial narratives and global fashion histories. See also Tulloch (2010).

484 Fabiola Jean Louis’s photographic series of portraits of black women in paper gowns more often associated with European nobility (*Fashioning the Self*, 2017).

In much the same way that the body-cast was a problematic embodiment of the sartorial in the ethnographic museum, the absence of black mannequins for fashion exhibitions, and the hegemonic whiteness in *dress/fashion* histories, narratives and representation, equally disavows any contemporary museal engagement with or development of black identity constructions. The call for a greater relevance of the *dress/fashion* collections of Iziko Museums is not solely located in the content of the collections – many of these objects although colonially situated, can be remediated – instead they are largely encumbered by the exhibitionary tropes that continue to position them in limited dialogues with contemporary audiences. The concerns and efforts therefore to present ‘fashion interventions’ in spaces such as the Koopmans-de Wet house museum and the South African Museum cannot guarantee new audiences or welcome new, and in particular contemporary, black bodies into the museums without a critical interrogation of the modes of representation used.

A SUMMARY OF THE SARTORIAL EXHIBITIONS AT THE CULTURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

In this close analysis of the exhibitions of the Cultural History Museum’s sartorial collections, I have identified three concerns, each made visible through the choice and use of both standard and other mannequins. The first concerns the overriding representation of whiteness. As a further extension of the collection focus – where objects reflecting white, Eurocentric culture entered the Cultural History Museum collection, and objects of black, indigenous material culture were redirected to the South African Museum – the displays of Western fashion by the Cultural History Museum, reproduced notions of ‘fashionability’ as white. The exhibitionary trope favoured by historic *dress/fashion* museums internationally, of the discreet mannequin, has contributed to the adoption of uncontested, standard light-coloured, body substitutes that also fundamentally present Eurocentric body ideals and Eurocentric fashion silhouettes.

The second concern that emerged from this study extends from this point with regards to the specific fashion figures used by the museum, invoking particular embodied attitudes of culture, historicity, class and gender. The Cultural History Museum’s conservative, and uneasy relationship to *dress/fashion* is signified in these embodied forms – with the choice of mannequins reproducing conservative characteristics.

My third observation concerns a further tension, staged between tradition and modernity. This classificatory opposition, identified in the segregation of objects across the collections, is extended in the museum’s exhibitions in two ways. Firstly, objects identified as ethnographic on were ‘embodied’ differently, reproducing the notion of difference. Secondly, as in the case of *isiShweshwe*, the objects were framed within broader, museal discourses that distinguishes fashion from dress, the global from the local, and tradition from modernity. Critical attention with regards these concerns can be encouraged to facilitate a renegotiation of not only the content of the exhibitions, but the new forms that these exhibitions employ to engage meaningfully with a changed and changing viewing public.

SARTORIAL EXHIBITION AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY

EXHIBITING WONDER AND RESONANCE

In the final section of this chapter, I explore how the sartorial in the National Gallery reflects three distinct iterations. I consider the conditions and politics of sartorial display that include objects of indigenous origins, identified and presented as ‘African Art’ in the first iteration.⁴⁸⁵ The second iteration involves the display of sartorial objects largely identified as western or with western influence, not deemed or shown as art, but rather presented as fashion within an art context. The third form in which the sartorial is shown in the National Gallery comprises a wide range of work by contemporary South African artists who work with the sartorial as metaphors for, or signifiers of diverse notions such as masculinity, trauma, coloniality, domesticity, and many

485 The National Gallery’s collection of African *dress/fashion* that is deemed and shown as art is solely comprised of African ‘traditional’ sartorial artefacts, beadwork and blankets, as discussed in Chapter Two.

more. I track the introduction of the sartorial into the oeuvre of the National Gallery's exhibitions, the framing and display of these objects as art, and the various curatorial tropes that govern these artefacts within the institution.

From objects disavowed as art to 'hidden treasures' that are proudly exhibited, African beadwork, blankets and 'traditional' *dress/fashion* at the National Gallery have followed a trajectory akin to the reception and exhibition of indigenous 'crafts' globally. In a move that simultaneously honoured the cultural heritage of an imminent president, re-scripted an institutional identity, and re-situated a series of objects from the realm of craft into art, the first major exhibition dedicated solely to the display of beadwork from the Eastern Cape, *Ezakwantu: Beadwork of the Eastern Cape* (1993–1995) opened at the National Gallery six months prior to the proclamation of a new democracy in South Africa and the inauguration of President Nelson Mandela.⁴⁸⁶ Newly appointed director Martin (1990–2001) argued that the exhibition *Ezakwantu* must be seen "in the context of the history and mission of the institution, as well as the history of South Africa" (1993:6).

Curator Kaufmann called the exhibition a "major leap-of-faith, and that ... by recognising the cultural production of South Africa's people as worthy of exhibition in a national gallery, turned the museum upside down" (Kaufmann in Goodnow, 2006:171).⁴⁸⁷ Martin defended the decision to showcase the beadwork, arguing that,

... the beadwork, baskets, textiles, and headrests ... have exactly the same status as the paintings and the sculptures. I'm not interested in the so-called 'fine art' categories. They're European categories and we shifted from all that to be inclusive (Martin cited in Goodnow, 2006:171).

Ezakwantu included approximately three hundred items of adornment with a focus on eighty beaded accessories⁴⁸⁸ and around sixty aprons and skirts, and twenty blankets and wraps. The exhibition, explains Martin in the catalogue's foreword,

... show[ed] the beadwork in a manner which tells the story of the historical, social, religious and other conditions from which it was born; it delves into other meanings through the display of texts, photographs and paintings; it welcomes beadwork, which fits uncomfortably into existing definitions of art and hierarchies appropriate to an art museum, into the National Gallery; it celebrates the integration of form and function and the sensitive manipulation of shape, colour, texture, and pattern which results in objects of great beauty (1993:7).

The floor plan included in the exhibition catalogue showed a combination of the use of popular media (the newspaper debate on 'traditional' dress), political acumen (representations of Nelson Mandela and an African National Congress banner), and experiential, participatory practices (bead-workers were invited to share skills and stories in the activity area of the gallery) (1993:4). Curators Bedford and Kaufmann used glass cabinets in the gallery for various objects (aprons, diviner's cloaks, bags, neck cascades, breast covers, etc.), while paintings, photographs, text panels and various hanging displays were assigned to the gallery walls. One installation photograph "showing *amabhayi* (wraps) and *imibhaco* (skirts)", was included in the catalogue,⁴⁸⁹ where the artefacts were displayed as artworks, either hung as 'tapestries' or paintings, or lying flattened as semicircular objects. These 'disembodied' objects (originally made to be worn, and not made for display) presented major challenges for the curators, most notably the task of avoiding the usual ethnographic

486 *Ezakwantu* was the first exhibition to display the recently purchased material culture artefacts of the newly formed *African Art Heritage* collection.

487 The bias written into earlier acquisitions policies of the National Gallery prior to the 1990s resulted in exhibitions that, "although excellent, reflected a distinct Eurocentric bias ... with the result that Africa was relegated to minor exhibitions" (Cooke, 2009:164).

488 The exhibition catalogue cites 60 head pieces, 100 neck pieces, 10 arm ornaments, 15 body pieces, 60 aprons, skirts, 10 anklets, 30 bags, 20 blankets, wraps, 40 pipes, 30 ritual and 5 staffs.

489 Photograph by South African National Gallery (1993:5).

associations via the use of 'simulated bodies' or even mannequins (Leibhammer, 1995:81). The glass cabinets used for many of the displays however were still "uncomfortably reminiscent of ethnographic displays", claims Leibhammer (1995:82).

The exhibition garnered criticism in terms of conceptual rigour and approach, but as Cooke explains, "these kinds of exhibitions were [largely] without precedent and the curators had to be fairly experimental in trying to find the right level at which to pitch their revisions" (2009:182).⁴⁹⁰ Leibhammer identifies the impact of these challenges in her review, suggesting that

... while sensitive to the myriad voices that wished to speak, to the complexities to be presented, and to the overwhelming need to rectify so much past inequality, the exhibition, although rich in information, lacked visual and conceptual coherence (1995:82).

Martin, confident that these changes were necessary,⁴⁹¹ cites developments in other local art institutions that pointed to crucial shifts in thinking about art, its categories, and the capacity of institutions to be more democratic and diverse.⁴⁹² An important exhibition at the site of what was to become the new home of Museum Africa in Johannesburg, *Tributaries* (1985) provoked much debate about high and low culture, and insider and outsider art, and the categories that defined and divided them (Burnett, 1985:1). *Ten Years of Collecting (1979–1989): Standard Bank Foundation Collection of African Art, University Art Galleries' Collection of African Art and Selected Works from the University Ethnological Museum Collection* (1989) exhibited a southern African collection that was "considered the largest of its kind" at the Wits Art Museum – formerly the Gertrude Posel Gallery, Johannesburg (Blanckenberg, 2012:47).

Another exhibition that "intended to be corrective to the tyranny of aesthetic hierarchies, as well as to apartheid divisions" was *The Neglected Tradition: Towards a new history of South African Art* (1988) at the Johannesburg Art Gallery (Dubin, 2009:41). Three years later, the Johannesburg Art Gallery hosted *Art and Ambiguity: The Brenthurst Collection* (1991), a major exhibition showcasing traditional art of the southern Africa sub-continent. It was the first time that such a collection of material culture objects were shown in an art museum (Till, 1991:2). Till claims that although the "relocation of material from ethnographic to art museums [was] not a new phenomenon, in South Africa the opportunity to exhibit the Brenthurst collection in an art museum context sharpened the focus on local forms of art (1991:3). In Durban exhibitions such as *Things People Make* (1981) at the Durban Art Gallery, *Toys and Dolls* (1983) at the African Art Centre, and numerous group and solo shows held at the Natal Society of the Arts (NSA) Gallery, also confronted and shifted the locus of cultural appreciation and significance.

Further afield, art critic Roberta Smith reflects on "two exhibitions of African art that [had] just opened in uptown New York museums [which were] igniting an unexpected dialogue and exchange of ideas" (1988). Firstly, *Art of the Dogon: Selections From the Lester Wunderman Collection* (1988) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MoMa), was an exclusive concentration of statues, metalwork, jewellery, carved containers and masks, shown in a way that "surveys of African art – no matter how they are structured – mostly, cannot achieve" (Smith, 1988). Secondly, *Art/Artifact: African Art in Anthropology Collections* (1988) at the Centre for African Art in New York, writes Susan Vogel,

490 The exhibition was not completely without precedent. Immediately prior to *Ezakwantu*, the National Gallery had shown a similarly, ground-breaking exhibition titled *Affinities* (1991–1993), an exhibition that combined all types of creative endeavour to show 'affinities' between works with a particular focus on South African artists who had worked with, or depicted 'Ndebele' beadwork or architecture (Cooke, 2009:168).

491 The contributors to the catalogue and production of the exhibition speak to this confidence. Including, Albertina Sisulu, Nettleton, Becker, Stevenson, other researchers and museum staff, sponsors & lenders (museums, universities, individual collectors), photography sources, exhibition producers (curators, education, conservators, wall texts, artists, videos), authors (Davison, Bedford, Kaufmann, Hopper, Kloppe, Ndabambi etc.) and advisors.

492 Martin, personal interview, 01/09/17.

... was not an exhibition about African art or Africa, it was not even entirely about art. [Instead] ... it was an exhibition about the ways Western outsiders have regarded African art and material culture over the past century (1988:11).

My focus in this chapter, as an interrogation of the display of sartorial objects in different institutions, and how this resulted from both inherited and ongoing, disciplinary display practices, has also led me to reflect on the effects of the display tropes in terms of the reception and engagement with the objects on display. The challenges of displaying indigenous sartorial objects as art have largely resulted in the removal of all indications of the 'original' bodies or wearers of the objects, such that in contemporary and 'modern' art contexts, the ongoing decontextualisation of sartorial objects such as beadwork, blankets and wraps perpetuates the disavowal of the wearer. The wearer is 'invisibilised', allowing for, or facilitating, unencumbered spectatorship or aesthetic appreciation. Where museums are encouraged to "insert the body back into historical costumes" (Petrov, 2012b:190), and ethnographic, sartorial objects presented as art, remain primarily without bodies.

Following Stephen Greenblatt, the beaded (and other ethnographic) objects on display are primarily framed within the notion of wonder – "the power of the displayed object to stop the viewer, to convey an arresting sense of uniqueness [and], to evoke an exalted attention" (1991:42). Greenblatt however, identifies a second notion of power with regards the displayed, museum object, that of resonance. By reflecting on the beaded (and other) objects, as objects of resonance, I ask "whether they [can] reach out beyond [their] formal boundaries, to evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces from which [they have] emerged, and for which [they] may be taken by a viewer to stand" (Greenblatt, 1991:42).⁴⁹³

In a landmark exhibition not only due to its historical breadth⁴⁹⁴, but also in terms of the efforts made to reframe the coloniality of thinking about art from South Africa, the British Museum's *South Africa: Art of the Nation* (2016–2017), showed a selection of historic artistic objects,⁴⁹⁵ together with works by well known contemporary South African artists such as Penny Siopis, Willie Bester and Mary Sibande, and a number of material culture objects that included an 'Ndebele' beaded apron and shoulder wrap, a pair of hand crafted leather sandals, and a 'Zulu' beaded waistcoat. "Not a novel approach," argues Corrigan,⁴⁹⁶ the exhibition "paired contemporary artworks with ethnological material from the British museum's collection, which encompasses objects of material culture, like beaded items and sculptures by anonymous artists ... as a means of re-categorising them as art" (2016).

The National Gallery's critical *Reflections on 1910–2010: From Pieterneef to Gugulective* (2010) curated by then director, Raison Naidoo⁴⁹⁷ included for example, three abstract artworks, together a Barbie doll dressed in beaded 'Ndebele' attire, two ornate 'Ndebele' aprons, and two lengths of beadwork in a glass cabinet (2011:18–19). The inclusion of selected items of 'adornment' as art, in exhibitions such as these re-inscribes simultaneously both what is deemed art, and what is excluded.⁴⁹⁸ Corrigan points to the complex issues surrounding ethnographic collections 'redressed as art' that resulted in,

... material that could not sidestep troublesome, and limited ethnic labels ... [and, conversely]

493 Considering the power of the disembodied piles of clothes, or neatly arranged, washed wardrobes, described in the beginning of this chapter, Boltanski's and Weiwei's use of the sartorial in their work, demands the viewer to recognise their resonance and to consider the "complex cultural forces from which [they have] emerged" (Greenblatt, 1991:42).

494 The exhibition showcased 100 000 years of South African art.

495 In particular the golden Mapungubwe objects dating from around 1200AD, as well as a 77000-year old, shell bead necklace from the Blombos Cave in the Western Cape.

496 Corrigan points to this method already embraced by curators working in South African museums in the late eighties to early nineties as "a way of reconfiguring the status of collections previously part of ethnographic projects, or justifying the collecting of material cultural objects" (2016).

497 The exhibition showcased South African art in such a way so as to reflect "a new vision for the gallery to address long-standing and pertinent issues, how representative our collection [was] ... and not being afraid to show the gaps" (Naidoo, 2011:16).

498 Western fashion artefacts, South African designer items, or contemporary indigenous objects were still denied entry in this collection.

a lack of interest and support from black South Africans [as] elevating these objects to art, further advanced white objectification of black life (2016).

The 'Ndebele' beaded apron and shoulder wrap that were exhibited in the British Museum, much like the 'Xhosa' aprons and wraps displayed at the National Gallery almost two decades earlier as 'artworks', are presented such that they are understood as finely crafted aesthetic objects, and not included in these exhibitions to invoke the absent wearers, but rather (and only) to elicit a sense of wonder in the viewer, through "convey[ing] an arresting sense of uniqueness, and evok[ing] an exalted attention" (Greenblatt, 1991:42). Their *art status*, argues Nettleton, is "contingent on this detachment, through which the designs of the beadwork are admired and the body is largely suppressed in, but not entirely absent from, conscious admiration of the object" (2013:43). Similarly, Gutierrez argues though that the display of *dress/fashion* commodities reframed as artworks in art museums "decommodifies and disembodies them ... rendering them a-political" (2014:103).

WHEN FASHIONED AS ART

The National Gallery's exhibition *Women's Work: Crafting stories, Subverting narratives* (2016), curated by Ernestine White and Olga Speakes, was dedicated to 'crafts' gendered as the 'work of women.' The 'Ndebele' blanket was once again included in the exhibition⁴⁹⁹ and presented various forms of the ongoing refusals and disavowals noted above. Art critics, Isabella Kuijers and Lloyd Pollack argue that the inclusion of,

... such old-fashioned artefacts as we associate with anthropological and ethnological museums – a beaded KwaNdebele marriage blanket, fragments of antique Indian embroideries and an inordinately tiny and exquisite lace insert created circa 1830 by a slave about whom nothing is known beyond a name: Melati – contextualise the contemporary works that invert, subvert or transcend the associations of the medium of the needle and thread (2016).

The 'Ndebele' blanket – originally made to be worn – as an art object in *Women's Work* was displayed as a wall hanging.⁵⁰⁰ The wall label identified the 'artwork' as,

Unknown artist, KwaNdebele. *Irara (Beaded Marriage Blanket)*
c. 1970 Textile, beads ISANG COLLECTION 91/73

There is neither recognition nor explanation given in terms of who may have made the blanket – maker unknown – or who may have worn the blanket – as a marriage blanket this would have been of memorable concern to the owner and/or maker. The additional text panel dated the beadwork as mid-century ('having a subdued palette'), yet assigned the blanket to a later date (c.1970) without supporting explanation or evidence.⁵⁰¹ The wall text further described the 'women' as "recorders of Ndebele history and evolving worldviews,"⁵⁰² yet their agency – as maker or wearer – was rendered mute in the exhibition.⁵⁰³

The curatorial forces that situate the maker, and making, of craft objects in the art museum, offer little consideration for the wearer or wearing of the object. Yet, a conceptual engagement of what it means to wear

499 The blanket is shown in the first exhibition gallery together with the three-dimensional works of Barend de Wet, Nicholas Hlobo and Mark Rautenbach. Gallery visit, 12/12/16.

500 Counter to the flat display methods used to display most non-Western fashions, curators Scaturro and Fung point to "prevailing philosophy of the Costume Institute [at the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art] that Western high fashion is best understood when the object's relationship to the body and silhouette is clear" (2016:161).

501 Following Long, this may reflect similar patterns of reuse of beadwork noted in the Eastern Cape beadwork practices (aesthetic and historical value, but also monetary value of glass beads).

502 Because women crafters in a society such as South Africa have not been able to express their view of their world in voice or text, the false assumption is that "they do not do so via their creative work" (Watt, 2011).

503 This is not unusual with African Art collections, yet in the context of this exhibition the absence would require more critical attention, particularly in relation to the agency acknowledged the balance of the objects on the show.

a form of socio-political commentary was made explicit in the masked portraits of Francois Knoetze and Mark Rautenbach's marginal knitted garments. The recognition of the conceptual engagement with wearing and embodiment could thus have been applied to the beaded blanket in this exhibition, in terms of a contemporary and critical 're-mediation' of the beaded blanket as 'wearable sculpture'. In this regard, a re-mediation of the 'Ndebele' blanket as fashioned object, shown in relation to the body, could elicit from the viewer a response that would consider the object's resonance or "complex cultural forces from which it has emerged" (following Greenblatt, 1991:42).

Nine months later, the National Gallery's *Hidden Treasures: From our Permanent Collection of African Art* (2017) opened, showcasing a collection of almost one hundred pieces from the African Art collection, including a number of the same 'Ndebele' objects described above. My attention with regards to the display of sartorial objects in Iziko Museums however alerted me to two notable shifts in *Hidden Treasures*. The 'Ndebele' artefacts in the first exhibition room⁵⁰⁴ followed the outdated display methods and approaches discussed above. Similarly, a 'woven cloth for a man',⁵⁰⁵ a ceremonial back skirt or *beshu*,⁵⁰⁶ and a diviners cloak⁵⁰⁷ were all shown as wall hangings, and a further seven items were displayed in glass cabinets. However, there were also welcome signs of change in the exhibition.

Firstly, seven of the items were displayed on some type of body form. The Nigerian men's robe (unknown artist) was displayed on a cream coloured mount to represent shoulders, while the 'Msinga' ceremonial skirt,⁵⁰⁸ and a headdress,⁵⁰⁹ and the 'Xhosa' skirt and apron⁵¹⁰ were displayed as if on a body, that allowed observation from all sides. Lastly, a large 'Xhosa' cape⁵¹¹ and coordinating 'Xhosa' neck cascade⁵¹² were displayed on a cloth-covered, dress mannequin in a stand-alone cabinet. This curation of the sartorial object as a worn item, signals a significant shift in the recognition of the identity politics, and presence of the 'absent' wearer. As Hjemdahl explains, body substitutes provided the adequate, yet discreet armature necessary to re-form and support the garment in its original three-dimensional sculptural shape that satisfied conservation standards, while simultaneously and convincingly, evoking the human presence (2014:117).

The second notable shift in the curation of these sartorial objects was the colour choices of the body forms, namely the dark brown, stitched inserts where the 'body' appeared in the two skirt/apron displays, and the full-size dressmaker's mannequin that was covered in black cloth. Gutierrez suggests how,

... viewing fashion at a museum, not only as intrinsically aesthetic objects, but as items that motivate aesthetic processes of meaning-making ... opens spaces for museum-goers to experience exhibitions ... as [ways to modify] regimes of social engagement via fashion and the bodily forms on display (2014:104).

In this regard, the presence of 'black' bodies in an exhibition of African sartorial artefacts in the gallery, conveys a move akin to the exhibition *Fashion Cities Africa* at the Brighton Museum (2016) and Amsterdam's Tropenmuseum (2017), which posited an African sartoriality as 'fashion', a move from the notion of African adornment as disembodied and decommmodified as 'art' (McGregor et. al forthcoming:10). This move, aimed at "confronting a politics of knowledge around African sartorial practice and museum work, deliberately crosscut conventional categories and practices" (McGregor et. al forthcoming:1).

504 This included an 'Ndebele' wall panel painting by Betty Masanaabo, Esther Mahlangu's painted court shoes, ISANG2003/44, as well as 'Ndebele' bridal beaded veils and two 'Ndebele' marriage blankets, ISANG87/54 and ISANG91/71.

505 ISANG97/65:5

506 ISANG91/211

507 ISANG2008/12

508 ISANG2004/26 by Makhosana-Zibula

509 ISANG2004/27 by Mahadika Zonde

510 90/68W:46 and 90/68W:18

511 90/68W:46 and 90/68W:18

512 ISANG94/8:1

SOUTH AFRICAN 'FASHION' AS ART: DESIGN, ART AND THE WESTERN BODY

Following on from the first iteration of African sartorial artefacts largely displayed as art, I look at the second iteration of *dress/fashion* artefacts in displays at the National Gallery, in which the notion of 'fashion' as a Western construct situates items of western dress⁵¹³ outside of 'art', and what conditions and politics (of the Western versus African fashion divide) persist in terms of art institutions, particularly locally, and, until recently, also globally.

The recently acquired MaXhosa contemporary jersey (that draws inspiration from a beadwork heritage)⁵¹⁴ reflects the institution's ongoing curatorial distinctions between African and Western dress, fashion and art. Although identified and marketed as a contemporary referencing of tradition and heritage, curator Kaufmann recommended that the Cultural History Museum purchase the jersey, suggesting that it did not fit the African Art collection criteria, yet "it would be an interesting object to be shown in the National Gallery some time in the future".⁵¹⁵ Conversely, the MoMa in New York commissioned a MaXhosa jersey for their exhibition, *Items: Is Fashion Modern?* (2017).⁵¹⁶

The Sartists were also commissioned to create a prototype for the MoMa exhibition. They presented a patchwork pair of chinos as part of a 'thrifed' and re-crafted ensemble of a suit, shoes and hat. The chinos joined eight other pairs of trousers on the show, out of the one-hundred-and-eleven iconic items.⁵¹⁷ These trousers were displayed in all manners in the exhibition – flattened, suspended, filled with invisible bodies, or on full-size fashion mannequins (some with heads, and some without). The 1940s Zootsuit,⁵¹⁸ and the Sartists's patchwork suit (as well as some other items) were displayed on black retail mannequins, while garments such as hoodies, t-shirts and shift dresses were displayed on discreet or invisible mannequins.⁵¹⁹ Sarah Byrd however argues that,

... the assortment of display treatments [in the exhibition] undermined the effectiveness of the objects. Some pieces were on articulated mannequins, many had invisible mounts, and a few were on T-forms. Was this an intentional choice to include or remove a body in an attempt to focus more on the design in some cases? (2018).⁵²⁰

I argue that the National Gallery, in addition to their lack of fashion curatorial experience and the ongoing fashion/art debate, faces a further challenge with regards to any effective engagement with 'fashion' in the institution, namely the problematic classification of 'authentic' African adornment i.e. *dress/fashion* as art. In many ways this reflects Kuldova's argument that the challenges faced by museums globally to exhibit contemporary fashion "resembles the debates, by no means resolved, around 'primitive' or 'tribal' art that were around in the 1990s" (2014:333).

The first formal foray to exhibit 'fashion' at the National Gallery was an exhibition titled *Imagining Beauty: Body Adornment including young South African Designers* (2010–2011) that included a number of items from the National Gallery's permanent African Art collection – beadwork and ceremonial pieces from West, Central Africa and South Africa, particularly 'Ndebele' and 'Xhosa' items – together with contemporary *dress/*

513 This would include African fashion that reflects contemporary western practices.

514 SH2014/206. Purchased at Merchants on Long, Long Street, Cape Town for R2280-00.

515 Van Delen, personal interview, 22/12/17.

516 The MaXhosa by Laduma jersey, titled *Aran for Contemporary Culture* (2017) was a reinterpretation of the Aran sweater (Antonelli, 2016).

517 The list included 1930s Harem Pants, 1940s Capri Pants, Suits incl. a 1940s Zoot Suit, 1947 Levis, 1970s Safari Suit, 1970s Tracksuit, 1970s Jumpsuit, 1980s Yoga Pants, 1980s Leather Pants and 1990s Chinos (MoMa, 2017:3–7).

518 I discussed this in detail in Chapter One.

519 Wood argues that the invisible mannequin "best supports the production of narratives other than those focused on dress, the body or identity" (2016:121).

520 In a similar sentiment, Nadine Stewart declares that, "a red hoodie, which was supposed to evoke Trayvon Martin and his tragic death, simply looked like it was randomly hung there by the installation staff" (2018).

fashion objects made from recycled materials, and the key component of the exhibition, the work of the five nominees of the *Mercedes-Benz South African Award for Fashion Design 2009*: Black Coffee,⁵²¹ Craig Native, Darkie Clothing, Mantsho, and Maya Prass. The exhibition explored themes of identity, culture, diversity and different ways of imaginative expression through fashion. Showcasing 'fashion' in an art institution offered the Mercedes-Benz coordinators enhanced credibility, yet the National Gallery's position on the overlaps between fashion, dress and art was challenged. Kuldova argues that the risk of blurring the distinction between institutional voices and corporate identities increases as "the 'artification' of fashion becomes ever more popular ... [and] a museums' lack of self-reflection dovetails with the reception of sizable sponsorships from brands" (2017:316).

The 'fashion' on display included for the first time, the selection of Western designer fashion 'framed' as art, together with the already-regarded-as-art, indigenous sartorial artefacts, a selection of paintings from the Bailey Collection of British Art (reflecting themes explored in the displayed works of South African artists Doreen Southwood and Andrew Putter), as well as the work of various unknown beadwork artists 'celebrated' in the 8th Definitive Series of South African Beadwork on Stamps. All the 'fashion' items and a few accessories in the exhibition were presented on mannequins or body forms, unlike the 'traditional' objects of adornment that were presented as wall hangings or in glass vitrines. The 'fashion' objects exhibited on the mannequins proclaimed these objects as *fashion* within the fine arts framework. The 'disembodied' African sartorial artefacts were once again excluded from the notions of 'fashion', namely modernity, diversity and globality.

While the largely accepted display of sartorial items of Africa origin framed and appreciated as art continued mostly uncontested at the National Gallery, Western *dress/fashion* objects have not featured again in any group shows or stand-alone exhibitions. One year after *Imagining Beauty*, an exhibition celebrating Barbara Tyrrell's highly accurate visual renderings of southern African 'costume' and marking the centenary of her birth, opened at the National Gallery, *Iqholo Le Afrika: A Centenary Celebration of the Life and Work of Barbara Tyrrell* (2012). Items of adornment from the National Gallery's African Art collection were once again included in the exhibition to "complement Tyrrell's sketches and paintings of indigenous peoples in their traditional dress" (Iziko Museums, 2012). In this case, the term 'costume' used by the museum in their media⁵²² distanced the sartorial objects from being understood as artworks or as fashion; instead they were considered as 'costume' in this particular showing.⁵²³

Tyrrell's position at the nexus of three overlapping disciplines, of art, fashion and ethnography, presented an opportunity to blur their boundaries. The National Gallery however chose to present the sketches depicting the sartorial objects⁵²⁴ as the 'art' in *Iqholo Le Afrika* and the 'costumes' as complementary only. Trained in fine arts and fashion design, Tyrrell's attention to detail and "her fascination with her sitters, [allowed her] to portray them as individuals in their own right, [with] the traditional dress carefully enhancing each sitter's personhood" (Schreuder, 2012). These qualities were neither acknowledged nor explored in the exhibition. As described by Liebhammer,

... in their informative, quasi-scientific manner, Tyrrell's images reference both fashion drawings and ethnographic records. However, the manifest elegance and decorative quality of her work meant that it was not confined to ethnographic [or fashion] illustration, but lent itself to appropriation as art (2011:55).

521 The work of Black Coffee was chosen as the winner for its "nuanced unravelling of a contemporary African identity" (Levin, 2009:21). A group of hooded figures draped from head-to-toe in metres of monochromatic red fabric offered a cross-cultural fusion of 'tradition' inspired by "the silhouette created when African mothers wrap their children with blankets and carry them on their backs. The head-to-toe clay colour of the Himba was also inspirational, as were African hairstyles like the cornrows, dreadlocks and braids" (Ganzenberg, 2009:16).

522 This includes the press releases, interviews, marketing and invitations.

523 Sensitivity around the ethnographic term 'dress' may have also influenced this particular usage.

524 Her drawings were published in *Tribal peoples of Southern Africa* (1976). See also Liebhammer (2011:55).

In the following year, the question 'is fashion art?' once again underpinned the National Gallery's next venture dealing with South African, western 'fashion', *Fashion Meets Art* (Iziko Museums, 2013b). This time however, the National Gallery featured as the "iconic venue ... where the exhibition halls proved the perfect runway for Adriaan Kuiters' menswear show as part of Cape Town Fashion Week 2013" (ibid.). Via their press release, the gallery carefully ensured that their values and practices were adequately distanced from the perceived contagion of 'fashion', assuring their readers that,

... the daytime event was staged during public access hours and was carefully managed to proceed without infringing on the contemplative and reflective experience that the National Gallery provides to visitors (2013).

Following this trend, Cape Town Fashion Week 2015 partnered with Zeitz MOCAA, and hosted *Fashion Art* (2015) at their satellite site in preparation for the future launch of the Zeitz Costume Institute. The *Fashion Art* exhibition presented two collaboration projects of Kudzanai Chiurai with Marianne Fassler, and Adriaan Kuiters with Jody Paulsen,

... each actively collaborating to form languages that extended all of their practices, and asking us to reconsider where art should exist. Was it now possible that fashion functioned as living sculptures? (Elle Magazine, 2015).

The blurring of definitions, and slippage of the terms – arts, fashion and costume – used by Zeitz MOCAA points to key debates that centre on questions such as, 'if' and 'when' is fashion art. In this stasis, the National Gallery has resisted the inclusion of 'fashion' items in both their collections and exhibitions. However, the need for a critical reflection of the isolation of 'tribal and timeless' African adornment is immanent, and urgent. In addition, the need to include contemporary work by fashion designers and artists addressing notions of identity, history, gender and memory, through the medium of *dress/fashion*, has become more complex as performance art, video art and installations disrupt and trouble the boundaries of what is fashion and art, and where they overlap.

SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEMPORARY ART: FASHIONING DISCONTENT

In the third and final investigation of the display of sartorial objects in the National Gallery in group and solo exhibitions, I consider the ways in which *dress/fashion* objects are deployed by South African artists dealing with broader socio-cultural concerns, such as displacement, migration, disruption or desire. I reflect on the critical capacity, and creative scope of contemporary South African artists working directly with the sartorial. This inclusion of South African *dress/fashion* histories, objects and practices in art galleries – when the 'work' is created by artists – is a common feature in contemporary institutions both locally and internationally. *Dress Code* (2017) at Gallery MoMo, Cape Town, was curated to showcase the work of established and emerging artists using the evocative medium of costume. Explains curator Heinrich Groenewald, the artists (including Sibanda, Jackson, Rory Emmet, Maurice Mbikayi and Sethembile Msezane) were selected for the ways in which they "utilise, subvert and critique, make social commentary, or express the complexities of representation and identity, all through the dressed body".⁵²⁵

Further afield, fourteen South African artists known for their critical use of fashion were invited to participate in American curator Andrew Hennlich's *After the Thrill has Gone: Fashion Politics, and Culture in Contemporary South African Art* at the Western Michigan University (2016) and the College of Wooster (2017). The selected artists employ fashion to interrogate a number of conditions of "newness in the present, and [in particular], the

⁵²⁵ Groenewald, email correspondence, 13–21/05/17.

spectres of apartheid and its colonial antecedents” (Hennlich, 2016:13).⁵²⁶ Hennlich proposes that,

... fashion and textiles, central to the practice of all the artists included ... becomes a political discourse in its own right, used by the artists to explore the social conditions of, and subjective positions within, the post-apartheid state (2016:14).

The identity politics scripted into the work of these artists working with fashion as their medium, make them part of a “celebratory embrace of a seductive socio-political moment – a post-apartheid, postmodern flirtation with freedom” (Corrigall, 2015). The exhibition, *After the Thrill has Gone* highlighted the possibilities of the sartorial as ‘language’ that is simultaneously productive, accessible, complex, malleable, and continually changing.

The newly opened Zeitz MOCAA museum in Cape Town includes the work of many artists who employ “garments, outfits and costumes in conveying narrative and meaning”, such as artists Ruga, Yinka Shonibare, Leonce Raphael Agbodielou, Chiurai and Mntambo (Zeitz MOCAA). This uptake of the sartorial by artists, and its profusion in art institutions, however is not equally welcomed, nor does it represent an easy solution to the art-fashion debate. Art critic, Blackman in his open letter to Zeitz and Coetzee in 2015, is however troubled by this ‘seamless’ fusion of art and fashion. Blackman writes of his concerns in terms of the development of the collection at the museum where,

... there is [such] a strong emphasis on ‘African’ notions of fashion and adornment. Certainly there is nothing wrong with this [focus]. The collection’s acquisition of the work of Nandipha Mntambo is welcome. Her work is a strong and interesting reinterpretation of this idea [of fashion as art] ... these ideas are [also] inherent in the works of the other artists being collected [by the museum] like Mohau Modisakeng, Cyrus Kabiru, Athi-Patra Ruga and Jody Paulsen. However, this is seemingly becoming the main focus of the collection as the recent announcement of the ‘costume collection’ and fashion design exhibitions seem to confirm. What this is beginning to do, in my opinion, is exclude and diminish the vibrant plurality that is Africa (2015).⁵²⁷

Blackman points to the limits of a fashion or costume ‘focus’ for the development of an art museum at large in terms of the collection and exhibition of contemporary African art. My argument here however points to the ongoing manner in which South African art institutions such as Zeitz and the National Gallery co-opt the use and display of *dress/fashion* only when presented as ‘fine art’, rather than recognise that the sartorial field exists as a distinct discourse that requires alternate forms of attention, in addition to the powerful and productive approaches employed within the fine art canon.

A SUMMARY OF THE SARTORIAL EXHIBITIONS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY

I examined the ways in which the National Gallery has presented the sartorial in exhibitions across three identified forms, namely as decommodified art objects; as fashion; and as art that uses fashion as a medium. I have also identified three separate tensions that exist within the art institution and its *dress/fashion* exhibitions; namely as debates between art and craft, between Western and African objects, and between art and fashion. Firstly there is a tension produced when African beadwork, previously considered women’s craft and made to be worn, is classified and presented in the National Gallery as art. These objects of adornment are almost always decontextualised and presented without a body form – their disembodiment facilitating the shift from

⁵²⁶ In *After the Thrill has Gone*, Sibande confronted her matrilineal lineage via the sartorial traditions of domestic labour; Nicholas Hlobo embraced ‘Xhosa’ masculinities by binding leather, organza, rubber, knit jersey, and canvas together; Paulsen emphasised the intersections of class, race and sexuality through a form of sartorial parody and citation; and Dan Halter worked with fabric as a form of collage exploring the conditions of immigration (Hennlich, 2016:23–30).

⁵²⁷ This is point five out of seven raised by Blackman (2015).

craft object to artwork. With the primary focus being on the objects' material and aesthetic qualities, the realistic mannequin is rejected as being too ethnographic, the abstract display mannequin is deemed too commercial, and the classic Stockman is largely considered to reflect historical costume and not fashion or art.

Secondly, the distinction made between sartorial objects that are African and *dress/fashion* objects that are, relate to, or reflect Western fashion is made evident. The absence of a display mannequin in the case of non-Western *dress/fashion* objects presented as art, contrasts with the largely embodied Western *dress/fashion* objects when exhibited as art. Recent art practices, such as video art or performance art, and contemporary, conceptual or critical fashion curation practices aim to disrupt some of these display tropes.

The third tension observed in the display of the sartorial in the National Gallery, is the distinction between *dress/fashion* as an object to be understood and considered critically or conceptually as 'itself', such as a kimono or kanga, or a designer item, such as the MaXhosa jersey, and the sartorial artefact used by the artist as their critical medium – where the sartorial is employed for its signification of notions of gender, class, belonging, history, time, distress, longing or any number of conceptual concerns. The capacity of *dress/fashion* in artworks to deal with these conceptual notions is vested in the artist-curator who understands or appropriates the meanings and ambiguities of sartorial objects in multiple ways, with the suggestion that these notions do not exist in the objects themselves, nor in the type of display trope used, but require the intervention of the artist. The multiple and diverse sartorial meanings employed by contemporary artists as exhibited in the National Gallery, suggests however that the institution's own *dress/fashion* collections, when perceived through the lens of an artist-curator, can indeed become powerful, and meaningful tools to engage with concepts usually denied these 'troublesome, frivolous and floppy objects' in their archives.

Sartorial Readings Three

A TROUSER-LED INTERROGATION OF THREE EXHIBITION TROPES

In my final close analysis of the pants in, and absent from, the exhibitions at Iziko Museums, I cross-cut the tropes that govern and condition various ways of seeing, experiencing, and understanding South African sartorial histories, via the trouser-lens of this study. This analysis includes an interrogation of the aesthetic politics of the gendered and cultural stereotypes and hierarchies narrated in museum exhibitions of *dress/fashion* across the three distinctly marked spaces in the National Gallery, the Cultural History Museum and the South African Museum. To contextualise a re-thinking of the role of, and possibilities for, *dress/fashion* in South African museum exhibitions, I offer four sartorial readings in this chapter. Issues of representation, authenticity, abstraction, narrative, veracity, history, identity and knowledge are all relayed via the sartorial in the museum, and these trouser-led interrogations aim to illicit deeper understandings of the underpinning discourses, values, assumptions and dispositions at work in the exhibitions at the museums in this study.

The distinct exhibition tropes employed across the three museums, not only in terms of duration and content, but also through the use or disavowal of mannequins, body casts and wire forms, the presentation of sartorial histories and narratives in Iziko Museums, is divided and divisive. The recently dismantled, permanent exhibition of black sartorial identities in the South African Museum's *Ethnogallery* presented 'tribally' segregated and culturally 'frozen', fashioned narratives, that were curated in the 1970s to represent authentic, 'traditional' cultures unaffected by modernity. This framing of the objects, and thereby the wearers and makers outside of the realm of creative individual expression and contemporaneity, simultaneously positioned them beyond history; instead the objects existed in a permanent and mute stasis.

The exhibitions of *dress/fashion* at the Cultural History Museum reflected the converse – of temporary, fleeting exhibitions of sartorial histories – seeped in notions of global participation, modernity and mobility. However, a somewhat closer reading of the lack of exhibitions at the Cultural History Museum reveals the uneasy relationship between the museum as politically conservative and curatorially careful, and *dress/fashion*, with its capacity to be disruptive, ambiguous, and confrontational (particularly between the 1960s and 1980s), resulting in participation in the exhibition, *IsiShweshwe* (2013) that struggled to straddle the past and present through the lack of contemporary fashion literacies.

The third institution in this study, the National Gallery showed not one, but three distinct approaches to the display of sartorial objects in exhibitions – distinctions that were framed by an understanding of fashion as art, of fashion used in art, and of fashion staged in the in art museum. These distinctions determined partly by the original classification – as African Art, or as 'art', or as 'fashion' – determined the exhibition trope applied (namely, disembodied, embodied or re-imagined), impacting on the public engagement with these fashioned representations.

This chapter thus demonstrated how diverse tropes and exhibitionary practices were utilised in the display of sartorial objects and how they developed over time across the three museums. An evaluation of the effects of these display tropes on identity constructs and material narratives revealed four key concerns. Firstly, the disciplinary tropes sustained the ideological and often politically motivated framing of sartorial histories and identities within the museums. Secondly, the substitute bodies used in the exhibitions facilitated the reading of the objects as *dress/fashion*, and play a key role in the various constructions of racial, gendered and cultural norms in the museums in this study. Thirdly, the recent development of the field of fashion thinking, and its impact on the practice of fashion curation has drawn attention to the critical capacity of clothing in exhibitions to speak for, or about, for example gender constructs, loss and longing, diversity, class, or migration. Lastly, the capacity of object-centred approaches (in this case looking at the capacity of *dress/fashion* objects across three separate disciplines), allowed for opportunities to remediate the objects in the collections, and their affordances in the exhibitions to reflect diverse subjectivities, and alternative values and aesthetics.



Figure 34. Unaccessioned Item: Display Prop Pants. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.



Figure 35. Unaccessioned Item: Polish and Scuff Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

AN EXHIBITION'S CLAIM TO TRUTH

My first trouser-led investigation follows a pair of khaki pants, originally 'worn' by a body-cast in the 'Sotho' display cabinet of the South African Museum's *Ethnogallery*, and later 'worn' by the black, wire mannequin that replaced the body cast in 2012 (de Greef, forthcoming). These un-accessioned, unclassified, plain, khaki trousers were displayed together with a 'Basotho' blanket for almost forty years. Here, the object, as a display prop, provided the corroborative evidence of a 'traditional' sartorial narrative. This narrative followed the singular, legitimising ideology of the gallery, namely the collective exhibition of objects of 'traditional' material culture of various 'tribal' groups. The specificity of the khaki trousers, as a Western or modern object, was undermined and overwritten by the dominant veracity of the claims to authenticity in the surrounding displays.

The khaki trousers, suggested Klinghardt are "probably worth accessioning as an example, if there is nothing similar from the 1970s in the clothing collection ... [considering that these trousers] are an unregistered display prop dating from when the display was first installed".⁵²⁸ My research shows that there is a somewhat similar pair of khaki trousers from the 1970s in the Cultural History Museum collection. Accessioned in 1982, a pair of well-worn, khaki wool/polyester blend trousers that belonged to Immelman during his employ at the university library differed sharply from the Lybro-branded⁵²⁹ display trousers worn by the body-cast in the display cabinet.⁵³⁰ As everyday workwear clothing, the hard-wearing Lybro trousers created for, and worn by, mine-workers throughout the twentieth century, present a distinctly different life and labour narrative from the librarian's trousers in the Cultural History Museum's collection.

My request to photograph various pants from the collection facilitated an opportunity to access the 'display'

⁵²⁸ Klinghardt, email correspondence, 05/04/16.

⁵²⁹ In 1931 a factory opened in Elsie's River to manufacture 'workwear' including the brand Lybro.

⁵³⁰ SACHM82/406



Figure 36. Unaccessioned Item: Folds and Threads Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

trousers,⁵³¹ currently in storage since the dismantling of the gallery in 2017.⁵³² My previous experience in costume departments for film and television⁵³³ alerted me to the ‘aging’ and ‘authenticating’ techniques applied to these display trousers (see Figure 35).⁵³⁴ In an effort to present the pair of store-bought trousers as an appropriate ‘prop’ for the ethnographic display, certain coloured polishes had been applied to the obviously unworn trousers. These efforts at aging, within the museum, ironically contradict the conservation ethics that rule museological practice.

A further curatorial intervention is evidenced in the close viewing of this object. In the initial display of the trousers, as worn by Khusu’s body-cast, they were given neatly folded cuffs (they were presumably too long for the body-cast). These cuffs were hand stitched in white cotton thread. In the swift turn-around of the entire gallery to remove all the body-casts in 2012, and re-fit the displays with ‘as little interruption as possible’, the pair of trousers was notably too short for their new wire mannequin. The white stitches securing the turn-ups were hurriedly snipped, but the threads and folds remained as witnesses to their four decades of display (see Figure 36).

A forthcoming exhibition *Fashion Unraveled* (2018) at the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York will include garments that are worn, altered, unfinished, or deconstructed, to emphasize concepts of imperfection, decay and incompleteness in fashion. The curators suggest that recent interest in object ‘biographies’ has meant that imperfect or even inauthentic objects have been given greater consideration, and attention is now given to “signs of repeated wear, shortened hemlines, and careful mends that can be found even on haute couture

531 The khaki trousers were presented with their display prop ‘belt’ – a piece of store-bought, ‘aged’ rope, in contrast to Mr. Immelman’s trousers that were presented with his own leather belt.

532 Facilitated by Hisham and Ntombi, photographed by Andrew Juries on site, 22/11/17.

533 I worked as a freelance costume designer for a number of television, full-length feature and advertising commissions with Ikhaya of Costume, Johannesburg from 1998 to 2008.

534 As a costume designer for film close attention is paid to ‘aging’ of garments as the camera is key to details such as fraying hems or seams, scuffs or signs of wear.

garments" (Fashion Institute of Technology, 2017). In these terms, the un-accessioned trousers are a key witness in the life of *The Ethnogallery* displays. Not only do the trousers reflect the exhibitionary construct of the ethnographic display and its changes over time, they extend their disruptive influence in terms of the museum's classificatory practices, and bear witness to artificial acts of wearing, aging and alteration.

To unpack the complex narrative devices at play that invoke cultural and political identities in museums, Mario Caro draws on the 'gestures of showing' in exhibitions, where "objects on display conflate presentation and explanation" (2010:113–14). Since its inception, *The Ethnogallery* invoked frozen-in-time, 'tribal' identities of black South Africans, initially via the curation of 'dressed' body-casts, and later via the wire-frames. The sartorial objects on exhibit staged, and perpetuated for over forty years, a complex set of racial, political and ideological frameworks that underpinned a key apartheid policy via the division of tradition from modernity.

Surrounded by other objects, wall texts, an entire gallery showing 'tribal' identities, and the museum itself as a site for the narration of the material culture of 'others', the display trousers thus signified 'tradition'. The collective display of a singular narrative – that of timeless tradition – silenced the trousers' more complex identity – their meaning was changed, and charged, by the dominant exhibitionary account. Caro describes the 'normalisation' and acceptance of ethnographic objects in museums,

... de-contextualised and severed from their original sites, they are exhibited in museums in such a way that their displacement is not highlighted, so that they can fit with the constructed narrative by which they reify history, indexing another place and time (2010:108).

In an ironic twist, the store-bought trousers were displayed as 'traditional' dress, yet represented more 'truth' of the lived reality of 'Basotho' identity formations in the 1970s than the constructed, museal narratives of cultural 'authenticity' that were distinctly differentiated from modernity and Western fashion practices. The trousers, as silent and silenced display prop, were denied any shared histories or genealogies with other practices of modernity, migration, labour and politics. The influence of Western fashion on the dress practices, not shown elsewhere in the gallery, and denied expression in the collections, is shown here via a slippage of *dress/fashion* boundaries, facilitated by the store-bought display prop.

Revisiting Klinghardt's suggestion that these trousers are 'worth accessioning', I reconsider his concerns in the classification thereof, as they are readied for entry into the museum's Social History collections.⁵³⁵ Their provenance as a museum display object showing authentic 'Sotho' dress, suggests that they are an ethnographically-accurate specimen of 'traditional' attire, yet their possible acquisition and their museological 'identification', deem them to be Western, and not 'traditional'. As Klinghardt explained they would "still have to look at the trousers to see if there is a manufacturer's label, and to try to find any information about how they were acquired".⁵³⁶ Klinghardt further considered the possibilities of the classification of the trousers, noting that,

... a strong point in favour of their being accessioned would be if they were made in a Cape Town textile factory, elsewhere in South Africa, or in Lesotho (in which case they will be classified under their country of origin – 'South Africa' or 'Lesotho').⁵³⁷

Had anthropologists, collectors or dealers in the 1970s considered Western trousers – worn by entire communities in both rural and urban environments – as appropriate for 'ethnographic collection', the trousers would have been purchased in a rural, trading store or from individuals 'in the field', and *may* have entered

535 Used as a display prop is part of their provenance and will be recorded as such, but will not determine where they go in the classification system. Klinghardt, email correspondence, 20/10/17.

536 My research in the Ethnogallery display file, 'Sotho' folder, that details the casting project of Archie, the entire museum contents of the display, and the wall text prepared for the cabinet, did not contain any communication or notes regarding the trousers. Klinghardt added a further comment that the trousers "were probably purchased, but perhaps they came second-hand from a staff member or even Archie himself?" Klinghardt, email correspondence, 20/10/17.

537 Klinghardt, email correspondence, 20/10/17.



Figure 37. SH2010/19: Side-seam Stripe Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

the museum as an authentic, ‘traditional’ sartorial object. The artificial division of objects via the imposed classification of ‘traditional’ and ‘Western’ initially denied the trousers entry into the collections in the 1970s, and now almost fifty years later, re-awaits these trousers as they may (or may not) be accessioned into the Iziko Social History collections.

Drawing on Hamilton’s term ‘biography’ as relating specifically to “the period from when the material is first engaged with a view to it entering some form of preservatory housing” (2011:327), I propose that these trousers carry a unique biography, recognising that neither these trousers’ producers nor the museum ever intended that they become part of the museum’s holdings.⁵³⁸ Their ongoing journey defied, and continues to defy, various classificatory silos. This was a journey that began as an artifice, yet in fact portrayed a more authentic and honest identity narrative. It was also a journey involving an illegitimate entry into the museum, and a ‘life’ with an uncertain future trajectory, as the museum rewrites the story of ‘ethnographic’ dress, ‘tribal’ identities, and ‘traditional’ material culture practices in its merger.

In addition to Hamilton’s framing of the object’s biography in relation to its life in the museum, Kopytoff’s notion of the ‘eventful biography’ of a thing could be useful in thinking through “the story of the various singularisations of [the thing], of its classifications and reclassifications in an uncertain world of categories whose importance shifts with every minor change in context” (Kopytoff, 1986:90). As Hilde Hein points out, “over time and through successive generations of preservers, collections and the objects they comprise, pass through multiple prismatic meaning shifts” (2000:56). The radical socio-political transformation in South Africa over the last forty years has impacted dramatically on the contextual framing of the display trousers, from a deeply segregationist, apartheid order to a newly formed democracy. The trousers bear witness to these shifting relationships between individuals, historical narratives and socio-cultural realities.

My experience to date with Iziko Museums suggests that there will be no public critique of the collecting practices, classification challenges or exhibitionary tropes via the sartorial. These plain khaki trousers will be

⁵³⁸ The biography of the trousers would begin around 1978, when they were first identified for display in the *Ethnogallery*, followed by a life on display in a national museum of almost forty years.

digitally photographed, somehow accessioned, and packed away in a storeroom, their powerful, disruptive narrative will not be facilitated, and an opportunity to interrogate the multiple processes, practices and purposes of what it means to collect *dress/fashion* objects in the twenty-first century will be lost.

CARNIVAL: PERFORMING THE ARCHIVE

My second trouser-led analysis moves to the Old Slave Lodge Museum, former site of the Cultural History Museum. Shiny, white satin suits with stripes, in yellow, turquoise and black (see Figure 37), with matching, tiny umbrellas, straw hats and boaters, and a bright orange, satin two-piece outfit featured in a temporary installation at the entrance of the museum in 2014. I analyse the ways in which the vibrancy, sense of celebration and embodied memories were both expressed and suppressed in the exhibition, *Ghoema and Glitter: New Year Carnival in Cape Town Redux* (2014).

In 2010, a permanent exhibition on the long history of Cape Town's New Year carnival – a series of festivities and parades begun by slaves in the Cape colony during December and January in the early nineteenth century – opened at the Bo-Kaap Museum, *New Year Carnival and the Alibama* (2010), and a larger, yet temporary exhibition opened at the Castle of Good Hope, *Ghoema & Glitter: New Year's Carnival in Cape Town* (2010).⁵³⁹ The latter used costumes, musical instruments, video projections, and large-scale photographs, to show,

... how carnival participation has been passed on from generation to generation, while tracing the carnival's roots and its transformation over the centuries, [where] social life, politics, identity, popular culture, ritual and day-to-day life all come together in the celebration of carnival and in the performances of the Malay choirs, Christmas bands and klopse [minstrel] troupes (Iziko Museums, 2010).

In 2014, a reduced version of the Castle exhibition moved to the entrance foyer of the Slave Lodge Museum as part of Iziko Museums' broader transformation efforts to redress the notable absence of the historical, and cultural identity of Cape coloureds in the museum.⁵⁴⁰ The temporary exhibition included a number of wall panels, large black-and-white photographs, and a group of four life-sized, huddled and somewhat distorted figures, dressed in the bright, satin carnival costumes. The silent figures presented neither a troupe nor individuals by name, but rather, claimed van Delen, "were an artwork, that has since been accessioned to Iziko Museums Social History collection".⁵⁴¹

The decontextualised costumes in this display, removed from the carnival and their larger narratives of creativity, community and agency, are rendered mute,⁵⁴² and the role of the sartorial, not only as group identities, but also as signifiers of deep histories is lost and disregarded. In her thesis *All That Glitters Is Not Junkanoo*, Ressa MacKey considers the commodification of the Junkanoo carnival costume,⁵⁴³ and in particular, questions of exhibiting (and preserving) the costumes by museums, which in ways, "contradict the carnival objects' traditional performative and ephemeral nature" (2009:2). MacKey argues that while post-emancipation parades in the Bahamas – much like those in the Cape – became a vehicle for social activism and public protests (2009:13), in more recent years the Junkanoo festival and its costumes have been commoditised as a national symbol and colourful, tourist attraction as a "Bahamian collective identity"

539 Both in time for the global attention to South Africa during the FIFA World Cup in 2010.

540 Projects that do address coloured identities include the District Six Museum, which binds a site to identity and memory; Siona O'Connell's work on coloured identity via the beauty pageants Miss Gay Western Cape and the Spring Queen; and O'Connell's other project, which reflects on multi-cultural identity possibilities between the 1940s and 1980s in the MovieSnaps Project.

541 Van Delen, email correspondence 17/12/17.

542 The costumes were displayed together with a series of large wall posters. The posters reflected on the history of the street parades. However, there was no information provided with regards the 'costumes' – who wore them, who made them, what group they portrayed, what year they were made, worn or accessioned, etc.

543 The Junkanoo festival, and its related sartorial expressions, were a result of pre-emancipation relaxation of laws governing slave-life that took place in the Bahamas on December 26 and January 1 (2009:1).

(2009:18). Yvette Hutchison points to a similar construct whereby “Cape coloured identity is most often represented with reference to the New Year Carnival” (2013:191).

Denis-Constant Martin traced the political, social and commercial developments of the *New Year Carnival in Cape Town*, commonly known as the ‘Kaapse Klopse’ or the ‘Coon Carnival’, through a chronology of selected writings (2007). Slave laws were relaxed around New Year in the pre-abolition period in the Cape, when street celebrations developed with singing, performances and entertainments, with the first mention of “merrymaking bands of musicians parading in the streets of Cape Town in 1823” (Van Der Ross 1973:598, cited in Martin 2007:9). The 1st of December became an unofficial holiday and day of celebration after emancipation, in addition to the already popular ‘Tweede Nuwejaar’ or ‘Coon Carnival’. The evolving character and composition of the carnival, its songs, its costumes and staging were influenced by “touring groups of [American] negro minstrels [that] visited the Cape” since around the 1850s (Bouws, 1996 cited in Martin, 2007:12). The first formal ‘Coon Carnival’ was organised in Cape Town in 1906, with troupes,

... bedecked in brilliant colours, parading the streets to musical accompaniment, under the direction of a marshal or arch coon, whatever his proper title may be. Some of the costumes had been cleverly designed; and the effect was most striking (2007:44).⁵⁴⁴

Yet, the role of the carnival in Cape Town was a conflicted one within the coloured community. Lisa Baxter argues that in the 1960s and 1970s at the time of political oppression, forced removals in District Six, and a repression of movement in and around the city, “the ‘Coon Carnival’ became a cultural marker for belonging, and the physical reminder of a lost home and a way of life ... assuming a variety of roles and meanings” across different communities (1996:195–196). However, the fundamentally ambiguous position of popular culture is registered in almost “every major Carnival precariously poised between the affirmation of the established order and its rejection” (Cohen, 1993:3, cited in Baxter 1996:195). Marred by rivalry between various boards, city councillors, community groups and tenders, the notion of a cohesive, coloured, cultural uniqueness has struggled to evolve post-1994.⁵⁴⁵ The display of these outfits as the signifier of a specific cultural identity therefore is problematic.⁵⁴⁶

Furthermore, the display of carnival costumes, such as the Junkanoo festival outfits, argues Mackey, “proves contrary to the performers’ tendency to abandon their apparel immediately following the parades, [as] the costumes are temporary objects only” (2007:2). Via displays of camp,⁵⁴⁷ flashy coordinated ensembles, minstrel make-up and oversized or miniaturised accessories (Singh, 2018), groups participate in a carnivalesque performance of history, identity and memory. As Diana Taylor in her critical work on the limitations of the archive suggests, the repertoire facilitates and supports the transmission of “social knowledge, memory and a sense of identity through creative performance (2003:15).

Performance functions as an episteme and a method, argues Taylor (2003:17). The immersive, sensory experience of the carnival and the epistemic potential of performance in the repertoire are simultaneously lost in the museum. Also lost in the translation of the dynamic and participatory carnival into a museum display (and in this case, into an artwork placed in the museum) is the historical memory or embodied knowledge “generated, recorded and transmitted” with each new performance (Taylor, 2003:21). *Ghoema and Glitter: New Year Carnival in Cape Town Redux* (2014) thus neither expressed nor represented the complexities of the carnivalesque, the narratives of the participants or the histories of celebration, revolution and remembering.

544 ‘Coloured Coon’s Carnival’ (*Cape Times*, January 3:1920:9, cited in Martin, 2007:44).

545 The Tweede Nuwe Jaar Minstrel Parade will be known as The Cape Town Street Parade, it was announced on 31 October 2017 (IOL Staff Reporter, 2017).

546 District Six Museum, in their efforts to avoid ‘representing the history of the area as a single, coherent narrative’ engaged in multiple projects/processes to ‘hear different voices (Hutchison, 2013:195).

547 See Hutchison (2013:195) as central figure of ‘non-belonging, being a stranger to one’s place’.

THE ABSENT TALES OF SLAVERY

My third trouser-led investigation continues in the Slave Lodge Museum and is closely linked to the New Year Carnival as one of the few ways in which Cape Town's slave history has been acknowledged and remembered (Hutchison, 2013:191). This time however, my analysis once again concerns an absence.⁵⁴⁸ The renaming of the Cultural History Museum to the Slave Lodge Museum in 1998 was part of the broader Iziko Museums merger, and the funded transformation project that would bring the history of slavery into the public domain creating a platform for acknowledging the roles of slaves in the shaping of South African society.⁵⁴⁹ Although a number of permanent and temporary exhibitions in the Slave Lodge Museum have dealt with, and continue to present specific slave legacy narratives,⁵⁵⁰ there have been only a few attempts to imagine the notion of what the material culture of slaves could have comprised of, and through this, an embodied social identity.⁵⁵¹

Early in 2004, van Delen installed a very plain 1820s dress from the Cultural History Museum collection that in her words, "could have been worn by a slave in the Cape at the time [after the museum collections managers] really stripped our collections in our search for appropriate slave artefacts".⁵⁵² Only a knitted baby bonnet made by a slave named Melati was found in the collection. Remembered by colleague Esther Esmoyl, as 'the slave dress'⁵⁵³

...[that] was on display in the textile exhibition at the Slave Lodge, in a tall free standing display case in the middle room of the exhibition space. The pictures taken in 2004 [show] the baby bonnet knitted by [slave] Melati was on display in the same case.⁵⁵⁴

The evocation of the identity of a slave, via a dress chosen by the curator,⁵⁵⁵ signals the metonymic capacity of the sartorial in the museum. The power to evoke emotional engagement in relation to difficult histories via imaginative and immersive displays is reflected in Hutchinson's response to the exhibition *Slaves at the Cape: Oppression, Life and Legacy* (2011), at the Slave Lodge. Hutchison writes,

... how embodied memory can be mobilised to encourage a broad public to engage with more subjective aspects of this historical record, and thus enable empathetic response with material that may not be part of a visitor's own history (2013:199).

I acknowledge how little slaves may have owned and how little of this may have survived. UNESCO-funded archaeological excavations conducted at the Slave Lodge Museum in 2000 proffered a range of findings that included "stoneware marbles, a gunflint, metal scissors, pins, bone and brass buttons, coins, cowrie shells, and glass and ostrich eggshell beads" (Abrahams-Williams, 2000). Following Viestad's argument of the disavowal of Bushmen sartorial cultures in museums – where displays of the 'nearly-naked' Bushmen have dominated – I suggest that there is a similar disavowal of the objects of slaves within museums that sees the continuation of the original 'stripping' of slave identities in society, thus perpetuating the illusion that they had 'no material cultural.' Following this argument, there can therefore be no representation of slave material or sartorial identities in museums.⁵⁵⁶

548 Kewpie's suit an absence discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

549 Transformation funding received in the year 2004/2005 from the Department of Arts and Culture

550 Permanent exhibitions such as *Remembering Slavery and Slave Origins – Cultural Echoes*, and temporary displays include *My Naam is Februarie: Identities Rooted in Slavery*.

551 Yet, for example the display of slave traders' and owners' silverware and weaponry continue to occupy the upper floors of the museum.

552 Van Delen, personal interview, 22/12/17.

553 In 2016, the dress was again briefly displayed, this time to invoke a servant in the Koopmans-de Wet 'kitchen area' as part of an installation of dresses curated by then Iziko Museums textiles curator Lynn Abrahams. Van Delen, personal interview, 22/12/17.

554 Esther Esmoyl, email correspondence, 02/01/18.

555 Van Delen referred to her practice as a 're-inscribing' technique. Van Delen, email correspondence, 17/12/17.

556 Hutchison argues that the "embodied remembering of the New Year Carnival was a public performance" in response to the lived experience of invisibility by slaves in the Cape (2013:192).

I argue that the absence of certain objects from exhibitions can offer insight into the ideologies and dispositions of the museums in this study. As Chambers points out, “absence, not as a lack, but as an interrogation, produces a slash in the temporal-spatial coordinates of an imposed History” (2014:244). Paul Tichmann, current director of collections and digitisation, acknowledges that work is in progress to develop the Slave Lodge Museum as a museum of slavery, which would, more fully recognise the role that slaves played in developing the Cape Colony.⁵⁵⁷ The provocative evocation potential of the material presence of the bodies of the slaves via their sartorial histories has largely been overlooked however in the work developed thus far for the museum.

Archivist and historian Tracey Randle reflects on the dominance of cloth and clothing sold on auction in the Cape during the late eighteenth century, where the sartorial was highly desirable, both as unmistakable markers of social status, and as signifiers of freedom (2010:228). It is no wonder that, “even for slaves clothing and material goods would come to have particular significance, ... [with slaves] often resorting to stealing cash, clothing or fabric items” (Randle, 2010:230). Upon their arrival at the Slave Lodge in the eighteenth century, writes German traveller and early ethnographer Otto Mentzel,

... each male slave [received] a doublet and trousers made of coarse white woollen cloth with black streaks and lined with a cotton cloth called ‘sailcloth’. The doublet is adorned with 12 brass buttons. These outfits are made by the garrison tailors. The female slaves wear imported smocks from Batavia. It is made up of six yards of coarse cotton cloth (Mentzel, 1785, vol 1:169, cited in Worden 1985:92).

The brass buttons found in the excavation at the Slave Lodge Museum in 2000⁵⁵⁸ may have adorned one such slave doublet. No trace is left however of the doublet, nor the matching, coarse white woollen trousers. Although Strutt included sketches of slave dress in the Cape in her book *Fashion in South Africa: 1652–1900*, there has been no serious study of (or exhibition related to) fashion and slavery in South Africa.

American fashion historian Jonathan Michael Square, founder of the *Fashioning the Self in Slavery and Freedom* online project, asserts that, “fashion is a generative, yet underutilised analytic to explore the experience of the enslaved and their descendants”.⁵⁵⁹ In his course *Fashion and Slavery* at Harvard University, Square explores how supplied clothing was “open to manipulation and interpretation, and for slaves, fashion constituted a rich and unique medium for complex cultural engagement”.⁵⁶⁰ Randle traced the patterns of consumption and exchange in the Cape that similarly reflected these complex cultural exchanges, as clothing simultaneously “distinguished colonists, Free Blacks and slaves from each other”, yet at the same time, clothing offered opportunities for the blurring of these class markers (2010:231).⁵⁶¹

Free settlers, who had access to more variety of clothing and materials, clung more resiliently to conventional forms of dress, while creative experimentation and adoption was most strongly expressed in indigenous, enslaved communities, who with greater fabric and fashion restrictions presented the most sartorial diversity (Duplessis, 2015). The sartorial expressions slaves included the saving of single buttons and ribbons to add

557 Important tourism initiatives include prioritising the Slave Lodge and requests for presentations to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee and the UNESCO Slave Route Project: South African Chapter, have been delivered. Attention has also been given to developing online resources, workshops, and critical debates in this regard, in addition to exhibitions. Tichmann, personal communication, 26/07/16

558 Only four objects (a pipe, piece of lace, birth certificate and a slave-ownership paper) depicted the slave period (Abrahams-Williams, 2000).

559 Square, email correspondence, 26/09–02/10/17.

560 Ibid.

561 Miller expands on the ways in which the relationship between self, dress and freedom was established in the lives of slaves in America, through the issuance of clothes and attendant conditions; the frequent modification of garments as forms of liberation or expression; and the use of ‘dandyism’ as a creative re-definition of self and subtle mode of critique (2009:91–93). As Miller points out, “the use of clothing to visualise [new] identities indicates that the black people involved understood intuitively that identity can be performed, that race is a fiction, and that both are culturally and historically based” (2009:90).



Figure 38. SH2013:27a: Beading and Sequin Detail. Photo by Andrew Juries. Courtesy of Andrew Juries.

to standard issue clothes; the stealing or ‘borrowing’ of garments from their masters for special occasions, especially when made from fine fabrics; ‘cross-dressing’; or acquiring and wearing clothing beyond their station (Miller, 2009:92–93). These sartorial expressions could inform and support contemporary understandings of the personalities, desires and fantasies of the individuals that have largely been ignored in museums. As Square claims, “there is much to be understood about [slavery] via dress”.⁵⁶²

However, in the case of Iziko Museums, the absence of objects of adornment of slave communities limits the retelling of their narratives. Randle, in her efforts to curate ‘absence’ at the Solms-Delta farm (2002–2016) admits that,

... the biggest problem with absences is that they are often on such a large scale. [The challenge is] how to get the narrative back down to the individual body and experience, when sometimes, a whole generation or group of people is unheard of and generalized about.⁵⁶³

Carine Zaayman describes this archival absence as the ‘anarchive’ – that which is outside of an archive (2014:303). Zaayman exposes the way in which the identity of “the Van Riebeeck-era woman named Krotoa ... is all but obscured in an archive where only her effect on the concerns of the colonial powers has been noted ... [and] any telling of her story can only be shadowed by such absences” (2014:319).

Chrisman-Campbell describes how “documented slave clothes are as rare as Victorian black dresses are commonplace” (2017). In 2017, an antique textile dealer relayed her excitement to Chrisman-Campbell – the dealer had,

⁵⁶² See also *Materializing Slavery*, an ongoing research project on the materiality of enslavement and its afterlives (or legacies) in the present. As part of the Global Slavery Curatorial Project, the RCMC will work in collaboration with a number of partners to explore the actual material culture of slavery and colonialism (RCMC, n/d).

⁵⁶³ Randle, email correspondence, 03/11/17.

... received a call from a seller of a black dress worn by her great-great-grandmother who had died in the 1850s, which was *not another* Victorian black dress – the wearer, her great-great-grandmother was a slave (2017).

With comparable enthusiasm, a floral print, child's circular skirt circa 1860 with a pleated flounce on the hem, entered the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in 2007 as a gift from the Black Fashion Museum founded by Lois K. Alexander-Lane.⁵⁶⁴ The skirt that had belonged to African American Shirley Lucy Lee (1855–1929) who was born a slave in Leesburg went on exhibit as part of the inaugural *Slavery and Freedom* exhibition (Chang, 2016).

The radically changed perception of the sartorial artefacts of slaves bear witness to an altered reception of the lives and identities of the original wearers, imprinted on the objects' backstories or, as in the case of van Delen's efforts in the re-inscription of the plain dress, with the identity of a new wearer. These narratives now begin to influence the objects' contemporary capacities, and furthermore they reflect changed and changing museal practices, social orders, and historical constructs.

WHEN FASHION IS NOT ART, OR IS FASHION ART?

My fourth and final trouser-led investigation considers the impact of a designer object (commercially identified as fashion and twenty years later, auctioned as an art object) that was donated to Iziko Museums where it was exhibited as a fashion intervention in a house museum. One sparkling, bright-green, beaded, stretch sequin catsuit⁵⁶⁵ (see Figure 38), joined seven dresses in an exhibition showcasing the Chris Levin couture donation titled, *Centenary, Corsets and Couture* at the Koopmans-de Wet museum in 2013. As part of a temporary fashion intervention curated by van Delen, the de-contextualised, lightly stuffed catsuit lounged awkwardly in an early eighteenth century, floral armchair in a small reading room of the historic house museum, while the couture dress – displayed on standard cream Stockman mannequins – framed doorways, adorned stairwells and were intended to 'complement' the museum's various interiors.⁵⁶⁶

The use of fashion in historic museums to "ensure diversity, transformation and relevance", however does not guarantee that these agendas are met, argues Riegels Melchior (2014:2). Without the requisite fashion discourse or curatorial language to situate the fashion intervention effectively, the placement of fashion in museums can easily fail in its efforts to reframe, redress or re-imagine the problematics of the museum and its collections. The tricky proliferation of the use of contemporary fashion in museums, warns fashion theorist Marco Pecorari prompts "uncritical approaches – without any deep understanding of fashion, design or theory – [and even] perpetuates simplistic yet hagiographic, designer displays, and largely uncontested notions of dress and fashion histories" (2014:47).

Van Delen had hoped that *Centenary, Corsets and Couture* would reflect "fashion change through the contrast of typical nineteenth-century outfits with the twentieth-century couture garments" (Iziko Museums, 2014), drawing on the success of an earlier fashion collaboration with Dutch curators⁵⁶⁷ in a fashion intervention titled *SALON/locale* in 2011 (Iziko Museums, 2011). *SALON/locale* featured the work of South African fashion designers⁵⁶⁸ curated in ways that creatively imagined aesthetic or conceptual dialogues between the work of the designers and the selected spaces. Salon presentations, shows and interactions were staged over one week in museums, historical locations and private houses that included Koopmans-de Wet and Bertram House of Iziko Museums, as well as The Slave Church, 15 on Orange Hotel, and others (ibid.).

⁵⁶⁴ Alexander-Lane (1916–2007) founded the Black Fashion Museum in Washington in 1979. Her daughter donated the holdings of more than 700 garments, 300 accessories and 60 boxes of archival material to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in 2007.

⁵⁶⁵ SH2013/27a

⁵⁶⁶ Van Delen, personal interview, 14/11/14.

⁵⁶⁷ Gijs Stork, Manon Schaap and Cathal McKee, and facilitated locally by Rudi Reagon,

⁵⁶⁸ Designers included David Tlale, Athi-Patra Ruga, Stoned Cherrie, Clive Rundle, Gazelle, Darkie and Black Coffee.

In recent years house museums, ethnographic museums and even military or maritime museums have welcomed interventions by artists-as-curators, or independent curators to intervene with the practices, collections or display tropes of the museums and ‘activate’ these spaces.⁵⁶⁹ Although Dutch fashion curator, Jose Teunissen took sartorial objects as the foundation of exhibitions that she curated at Utrecht’s Centraal Museum (2000–2005), she maintains that the underlying concept of fashion as a cultural phenomenon was more important, which she ‘pushed’ as the crucial curatorial element (2014:37). In much the same way, former Frankfurt Weltkulturen Museum director Deliss posits a collection-centred paradigm. Deliss argues that not only would an artefact-centred approach offer museums a means to ‘remediate’ their collections and encourage interdisciplinary experimentation, but also, offer opportunities for critique on notions such as access and circulation (Sokolowska, 2015).

Key to the direction that Deliss developed, one based on ‘external impulses’, was the collaborative *Weltkulturen Labor* residency program, in which artists, designers, writers, lawyers and curators were invited to work closely with the museum’s collection (2015). In this way claims Deliss, objects were ‘remediated’ from within the museum collaboratively working with the outside ‘thinkers’ who produced alternative taxonomies, metaphors and new forms of competence, based on more diverse and hybrid knowledge systems (2015). This new way to ‘re-present’ collections that might seem out-of-date encourages “not only a different approach to knowledge, but also an interdisciplinary – if not participatory – way of learning” presenting alternative histories, and stories of objects (Adamopoulou & Solomon, 2016:45).

As part of a much broader fashion system, Levin’s couture pieces were made for social spectatorship of a particular sort, and the catsuit, as creatively ‘experimental’ for its time, was a statement by the designer, as much as it would have been for the wearer. In the same way as the beaded ‘Ndebele’ marriage blanket is removed from its context and wearer, the designer garment removed from its original ‘fashion’ context and wearer, and shown as a decontextualised and disembodied object, renders the object largely devoid of meaning. The displayed artefact is thus understood only as an aesthetic surface, with perhaps an appreciation for the materiality or craftsmanship employed in its making.⁵⁷⁰ The socio-cultural significance of wearing an ‘Ndebele’ blanket or a figure-hugging and bejewelled garment is altogether disregarded in displays such as these that translate *dress/fashion* items into art objects. Fashion scholar, Sarah Scaturro asks, “how can [curators] evoke the essence or significance of fashion in an object whose fashion moment has long since passed?” (2017:5).

Exhibiting catsuits, aprons, dresses or beadwork in museums without critical engagement with the cultural and political contexts of their making, their wearing, or their relationship to broader fashion or technological trends, limits the viewers’ capacities to engage meaningfully with questions of memory, identity or history. A more robust, diverse and inclusive sartorial literacy is required. Furthermore, it is critical to develop curatorial approaches that are interdisciplinary, decolonial, participatory, embodied, immersive and object-centred.

SIX DISRUPTIVE SARTORIAL REFLECTIONS

In the final four ‘readings’ of trousers on, or absent from, displays at the museums in this study, I addressed the notion of disciplinary voice and agency in terms of truth and perception in the curation of the sartorial as ambiguous objects; the double denial of slave identities in a museum of slave histories; the role of performance as memory acts beyond the museum; and, the demand for the development of a local fashion and curatorial discourse to support contemporary fashion museology.

Considering institutions such as museums as performative sites where artists, historians, curators and

⁵⁶⁹ Fred Wilson in American museums, Grayson Perry at the British Museum, and Christine Schmidt in collaboration with the Australian National Maritime Museum, a fashion and textile researcher developed a travelling exhibition *Exposed: The story of Swimwear* with the museum. Catrioni Fisk explored the role of *Fashion Museology: Negotiating Fashion Exhibitions, Material Culture Research and Public Interest in Historic House Museums*.

⁵⁷⁰ The values-based approach to fashion considers systems of circulation, aesthetics, meaning making, and identity (Scaturro, 2017:1).

visitors locate themselves in relation to narratives of self, identity, history and imagination, I concur with Lavine and Karp, who argued twenty-five years ago, that museums need movement in at least three areas: the strengthening of institutions to give diverse population groups a chance to exert control over the way they are presented in museums; the expansion of the expertise of established museums in the presentation of non-Western and minority cultures; and experiments with exhibition design that will facilitate multiple perspectives or reveal the tendentiousness of the curatorial approaches taken (1991:6). Projects with artists to engage, interact with, 'remediate', and disrupt the museum, its practices and its objects, are an effectual response to these challenges, argues Deliss (2015).

In the close sartorial readings I investigated the tropes that governed and conditioned various ways of seeing, experiencing, and understanding South African sartorial histories as presented by the three separate museums, now amalgamated as Iziko Museums, an analysis that included an interrogation of the aesthetic politics of the gendered and cultural stereotypes and hierarchies narrated in museum exhibitions of *dress/fashion*. I offer six observations to contextualise a re-thinking of the role of, and possibilities for, *dress/fashion* in South African museum exhibitions, which draw on contemporary fashion curation across various platforms of practice.

Firstly, I have shown that each of the museums in my study contains sartorial objects that share properties and practices. Whether identified as dress, fashion, costume, clothing or adornment, all have in common, a relationship to a wearer's body, and through this, an association to the wearer's socio-cultural context. Via the close readings of various pants on display, I have been able to bring attention to the curatorial tropes employed that not only perpetuate colonial- and apartheid-era stereotypes and misrepresentations, but also social and cultural segregation through their specific choice, and use of mannequins.

Secondly, it is evident that the body substitutes used in sartorial exhibitions are political. The *Ethnography Gallery* at the South African Museum, with its body-casts and later wire mannequins, presented sartorial objects as fixed with specific meanings, displayed on 'realistic' bodies, leaving little room for imagination, criticality, or individuality. The sartorial narratives on display did not invite contemplation or a questioning of identity, time, or change, and perpetuated museal framings of African sartorial histories as 'tribal', timeless, and unchanging.⁵⁷¹ The construction of Western *dress/fashion* in the museums however was positioned firmly within temporal frameworks that invoked notions of change, modernity and global connectivity. The use of usually light coloured mannequins also pointed to notions of 'whiteness' and the wearers of these fashions as global, modern citizens. The refusal to showcase Western fashion in South African museums as worn by black, coloured or Indian wearers⁵⁷² has resulted in mistruths that these sartorial histories did not and still do not exist.

Thirdly, the display trope favoured by art museums negated both body and wearer, which had two consequences. The loss of the body in the display forced a productive focus on the aesthetics and formal qualities of the object. However the erased body rendered the wearer invisible. In the case of ethnographic objects in the art museum, this erasure was often compounded by a wall text, which also named the maker 'unknown'. The problematic 're-embodiment' of the sartorial object in the museum (or lack thereof), also must address the perpetual failure of static displays to effectively re-animate the sartorial – so as to portray the dynamic of embodied fashion. Contemporary ways to 're-present' the body in fashion exhibitions include pictorial, sculptural, audio-visual, performative, and digital representations (Horsley, 2014). Here-in lies the possibility for imaginary re-embodiments, via 'non-bodied' representations, could encourage creative re-tellings and re-imaginings of the past in the present via the *dress/fashion* items in museum collections.

My fourth observation deals with when actual objects needed to tell the story are not in museum collections, such as with the almost total absence of the material culture objects of slaves. These absences require conceptual approaches that draw on other display interventions or museum activities. Randle, in relation to her curatorial work at Solms Delta, points to the near impossibility of reclamation when "these absences are on

571 Exhibitions are privileged arenas for presenting images of self and 'other' (Karp, 1991:15).

572 A project such as *MovieSnaps* is important in addressing these mistruths.

such a large scale”, suggesting that acts of performance and song could ‘return’ these stories, memories and life narratives to the museums that have for so long rejected their presence.

My fifth observation concerns the object representing a museum narrative, or rather this museum’s particular version of an ethnographic narrative of ‘tribal’ identity for almost forty years. The unaccessioned pair of khaki trousers was seen by thousands of visitors and understood to be an object of Sotho ‘traditional’ identity. The power of the sartorial object on display to represent a chosen narrative, regardless of its original purpose or intention, reflects fashion’s ambiguity – the meaning of an object is fundamentally changed with a change of context or wearer. That this store-bought pair of pants would remain uncontested on display in a national museum for almost half a century, prompts me to consider how double-breasted suits that look like those worn by Nelson Mandela as a young lawyer, or glamorous cocktail dresses that mimic those worn by Miriam Makeba, each of which can be found in the Cultural History Museum collection, could easily be re-scripted and re-inscribed, to invoke the narratives of other wearers, beyond the limited white script of their provenances.

In my final observation, I consider the notion of sartorial literacy, a language of fashion that is missing from South African museums. I have seen evidence of thinking critically about *dress/fashion* in museums internationally, and the impact of theory developing within the field of fashion studies. Engaging with the sartorial object as one would with an artwork, the surface, concept, medium and methods are assessed critically as acts of socio-political and positional markers of their makers or creators. I propose that *dress/fashion*, when contextualised and critiqued in museum exhibitions as reflections of, for example, social, embodied, aesthetic or political expressions, can be a powerful medium for re-thinking the present by re-dressing the past. Exhibitions, though they may be perceived as neutral, are always constructed, and can be used dynamically or disruptively to pioneer new relations between makers, museums and publics. While South African art museums are largely aesthetically and conceptually driven, ethnographic museums are deemed scientific, and cultural or social history museums aim for representation, they all could, and perhaps should consider new languages so as to disrupt the problematic, inherited stereotypes and explore diverse aesthetics and subjectivities *via* the sartorial objects in their collections.

CONCLUSIONS

TOWARDS DECOLONISING THE SARTORIAL DILEMMAS AT IZIKO MUSEUMS

While much of my study reflects notions of absence, marginalisation, segregation, disavowal, and limiting disciplinary tropes, I also propose new ways of thinking about the challenges faced by Iziko Museums in relation to their *dress/fashion* collections, and more broadly, the futures of sartorial objects in all South African museums. The development of a shared, cross-disciplinary and inclusive language that recognises and respects the richness of *dress/fashion* objects to convey new, alternative and hidden narratives underpins the purpose and potential of this research beyond the thesis and its three inter-related conclusions. Furthermore I propose that the ambiguities and social-political nuances, stored in the folds and seams of these material objects, will proffer diverse responses, leading to multiple outcomes that will disrupt the current stasis found in the sartorial collections of South African museums.

A DRESS/FASHION MUSEOLOGY

The first of these three relates to the entangled, troubling and disruptive potential of the conjoined term *dress/fashion* employed in this thesis. Riegels Melchior highlights conceptual distinctions between two types of museum practices, namely dress museology and fashion museology in her study of the collection and presentation of clothing in largely, European museums (2014).⁵⁷³ Riegels Melchior identifies dress museology as the early twentieth-century collection and display of clothing, aimed at presenting *dress/fashion* chronologically with stable and fixed, associative meanings (2014:11). The impact of popular culture and the related social changes of the 1960s influenced both the role of the sartorial in museums and related curatorial methods and practices. Fashion museology developed to encompass these new museal approaches towards the sartorial, engaging primarily with questions of ambiguity, change, diversity, and contemporaneity (Riegels Melchior, 2014:12). Fashion museology thus reflected new museal dynamics and emphasised the “visibility of the museum, the purpose of the museum, and its immediate relevance to people and society” (Riegels Melchior, 2014:11–12).

For many cultural institutions, aimed at adopting a ‘new museum’ ethos, the theme or inclusion of fashion seemed to “dust the museum off, and make it inviting, dynamic, and attractive” (ibid.) As museum scholar, Message outlines, ‘new museums,’

[...] seek to blur disciplinary boundaries, and promote interpretation according to a wide and inclusive scope of reference. [...] While the term ‘new’ refers to a particular style of museum [such as the Guggenheim], it also and, more importantly, indicates a desire for museums to appear relevant and appealing to contemporary society (2006:604).

However, while fashion exhibitions and fashion collections make museums attractive, they do not necessarily make museums reflective or particularly critical, “nor do they transform museums into forums for debate required to sustain and build democratic societies” (Riegels Melchior, 2014:13). This raises an important point for this thesis. Considering for example, the efforts made in the exhibition, *The IsiShweshwe Story: material women?* (2013-ongoing), to showcase diversity, address inequalities, and contribute towards visible transformation, the exhibition was severely hampered by various inherited, museal dispositions and practices at play.

The IsiShweshwe Story aimed to “reveal the interconnections and exchange of traditions between various social groups” (Omar, 2013:17). Through a range of curatorial inclusions and exclusions, however the exhibition perpetuated the cultural segregation and sartorial distinctions, previously prevailing in displays of *dress/fashion*

573 Although this distinction may be useful for Riegels Melchior, it reinstates the binary of dress and fashion problematised throughout the thesis.

at the National Gallery, South African Museum and Cultural History Museum. As an exemplar exhibition for Iziko Museums to “use the collections and resources to address contemporary imperatives such as social cohesion and equality” (Omar, 2014:9), it was clear that *The IsiShweshwe Story*, was perfectly primed to stage diversity, entanglement and cross-culturality. To consider some of the reasons for the failure of the exhibition to meet these expectations, I return to Riegels Melchior’s notion of two types of sartorial museologies.

Staff members from the Cultural History Museum determined the dominant curatorial impulse of the exhibition. Despite the merger in 1999, most museum staff retained their previous positions, even after the integration of the various museums’ collections, operations, departments and specialisations. The strong presence of the Cultural History Museum’s curatorial input meant that the overriding approach to the objects was determined by what Riegels Melchior identifies as a dress museology. In other words, the objects were largely framed within a certain chronology (except for the three ethnographic items which were distinguished from this chronology as traditional and timeless dress artefacts through their ‘re-embodiment’ on wire mannequins), and the meanings and identities of the individual objects were presented as largely fixed and stable.

Although *The IsiShweshwe Story* was deemed ‘groundbreaking’ – showing various South African sartorial repertoires together in one exhibition – the clear division between what was deemed ‘fashion’ in one exhibition cabinet, and vernacular dress in another cabinet, reiterated one of the segregations the exhibition had aimed to interrupt. To facilitate engaged epistemic interruptions, Mignolo warns that it is necessary to change the terms of the conversation and not only the content (2007:459). In the case of *The IsiShweshwe Story* the selected sartorial objects reflected change and diversity, and a contemporary interest. Yet, the curation of exhibition did not follow a questioning, disruptive or interrogative, fashion museology approach. Instead, the curatorial terms of the exhibition were still determined by the coloniality of the Cultural History Museum’s dress museology approach, despite the notion that *isishweshwe* as dress, fashion, textile and identity was presented as ambiguous, changing, diverse, and contemporaneous.

Had a fashion museology approach been applied, the segregated, racial and cultural divisions would have been confronted in the curation of the exhibition, as a rigour of thinking in fashion museology – through display tropes, representational discourses, or sartorial languages – would have demanded closer attention to these approaches. The need to reflect more diverse, and democratic displays of the sartorial in exhibitions in South African museums, twenty years after the fall of apartheid seems a just, if not urgent, demand. This includes social history museums, art institutions and ethnographic galleries.

The distinctive embodiment of the ethnographic sartorial objects, with black wire forms, in *The IsiShweshwe Story* reflects an altogether different approach to the sartorial in the museum – one consistent with ethnographic museums and their displays globally – whereas the object may be theorised as ‘dress’ (and clearly not ‘fashion’), its display in the museum is one of neither dress or fashion, but rather as an object of ‘material culture.’ Before its closure in 2017, the *Ethnogallery* of the South African Museum was a prime example of this anthropological museology, showcasing ahistoricised, culturally specific objects with fixed and unchanging meanings. Riegels Melchior’s distinction of dress museology points to sartorial curation as historical. The approach towards the sartorial in ethnographic museums has been neither dress or fashion museology, instead its method for thinking with and through the sartorial has been largely ahistorical and anthropological: namely, an anthropological museology.

Iziko Museums elected to dismantle the *Ethnogallery* in 2017, as a demonstration of efforts to rethink and redress their practices and collections. However, as a curatorial provocation, it is worth considering what the impact would have been had the challenges of the *Ethnogallery* been addressed by using either a dress museology – reframing the sartorial objects as historical, reflecting social, political and cultural change – or fashion museology – rethinking the meanings, agency, embodied expressions, and/or contemporaneity of the historical objects in relation to current politics or audiences. The two approaches, dress museology and fashion museology, offer two missed opportunities for the sartorial objects in the *Ethnogallery*, and more broadly, offer two ways in which to rethink and redress the sartorial objects in the ethnographic museum.

A third articulation of the relationship between sartorial objects and South African museums is found in art institutions. In this thesis, I explore a range of exhibitions and developments at the National Gallery, and note a distinct shift in the latest sartorial display in the museum worth considering here. The elevation of African craft objects, such as beadwork (collected originally as ethnographic objects) to the 'status' of fine art, suggests an elevated 'appreciation' of the object. Yet, as shown in the discussions above, the total disavowal of the wearer of these objects, impacts on the understanding of the objects, their embodied materialities, and their inherited subjectivities.

In *Hidden Treasures* (2017-ongoing), several of the *dress/fashion* objects are shown on body substitutes, reflecting a 'fashioning' of the objects in the art museum. Previously flattened to represent artworks, these items are now presented and appreciated as both an art object (shown in an art institution), and a sartorial object (as worn on the body). This shift suggests a rethinking of the sartorial at the National Gallery. Possible influences for this shift could include new approaches to *dress/fashion* in museums and art institutions globally – such as, the MoMa's controversial decision to host a fashion exhibition, *Is Fashion Modern?* (2017), almost seventy years after the only other fashion exhibition ever held at the MoMa. Other examples would include the increased curatorial attention from art museums given to fashion designers such as the late Alexander McQueen, Azzedine Alaïa, and Yves St Laurent, or Comme de Garçon's Rei Kawakubo.

The renewed curatorial approach to 'objects of adornment' by the National Gallery reflects a tentative uptake of a fashion museology approach, where the objects included in the exhibition represent an engagement with a range of questions underpinning notions of aesthetic aspiration, alternate cultural lineages, and to some degree, an 'epistemic disobedience' (Mignolo, 2011). A fashion museology approach, followed through in an art institution in the global South, confronts the distinct disciplinary boundaries of high and low art, of modern and tribal, and of Western and African. If effectively executed with a commitment to an 'epistemic disobedience,' fashion museology presents what Message identifies,

... as resistant forms of thinking, seeing, feeling, and acting [that] can be produced and theorised as a form of protest against disciplinary stagnation, for conceptual reconfiguration, and for historical interruption [that] emerges primarily as a result 'border-work' characteristic of theoretically engaged forms of museum studies work (2017:36).

This 'border-work' is also central to my own use of the conjoined term *dress/fashion* in this thesis, as the intentional amalgamation of two terms and their related practices. I suggest a *dress/fashion* museology, as a third formulation of Riegels Melchior's notion of the development of fashion in museums. *Dress/fashion* museology would be an interdisciplinary, decolonial approach that could address sartorial collections and histories in the global South as outlined below.

The historicisation of ethnographic objects, via a dress museology would contribute towards rethinking the collections of objects in 'world culture' museums. A process of historicisation would allow for new forms, or pathways for their integration into the contemporary, as part of changing, living, evolving modernities and socialities. Secondly, the colonial stain of 'costume' and cultural history clothing collections in South African museums requires a critical re-reading or range of engagements that would disrupt their 'stability', their inherited bias, and their skewed hierarchies. These objects would require a curatorial rethinking and remediation. A fashion museology would focus on the disruptive approaches that could call into question, notions of culture, distinction, meaning, and class, to name a few.

I argue that a combined *dress/fashion* museology could offer both of these approaches, as well as introduce a critical confrontation and reflective interruption of the binaries that divided the objects – and their wearers – in South African museum collections. Instead of being seen as separate, with fixed meanings, tainted and difficult, the sartorial objects in South African museums could be seen as significant materials with which to examine not only the articulation of changing identities, relations and socio-cultural conditions over time, but also the terms (and prevailing conditions) of their own museumification.

SARTORIAL AFFORDANCES

My second conclusion expands on the first through the specific approach taken in the sartorial readings used in this thesis. My selection of one particular object type, namely trousers, showed how thinking through *dress/fashion* objects across the three collections enabled both a critique of multiple museum practices and an exploration of the museums' representations of the past, in the present. The three chapters in this thesis each explored a specific phase of musealisation and museal life of the sartorial objects in the collections, namely their initial entry into the collections, their organisation within the collections, and their selection and curation for public display. At each stage, I employed the sartorial readings to interrogate and compare the museal practices governing the *dress/fashion* objects in (and absent from) the three collections, and the prevailing conditions and dispositions determining their status in the archives, their locus in history, and their uptake in the present. This approach affords a number of critical outcomes – made explicit in this thesis – which shows how new, innovative and interdisciplinary readings, led by a single object-type focus, can be used to rethink difficult and divided histories embedded within museum collections tainted by their colonial and apartheid pasts. This single focus approach across three separate disciplines (and including the related collecting, classification and display practices) differs from conventional research approaches that are either located within singular or particular design or historical chronologies, and which are almost always limited to within a specific discipline.

In the first instance, the trouser-led close readings clearly draw attention to, and sharply highlight the distinctions between the three disciplinary practices and related grammars at work across the three collections. These disciplinary differences manifested in, for example, what sartorial objects were collected; who was remembered via a select lens of certain *dress/fashion* choices; what kind of sartorial histories were constructed and what sartorial histories were omitted; how material objects were made to fit into colonial and racist frameworks; and, what forms of silencing, distancing and forgetting were utilised within the broader museums' modalities of meaning-making. By focusing on a single object type, it is possible to compare diverse museal discourses in relation to the single object type, and what is both shared amongst and largely missing from the three collections now forming the Iziko Museums collection of sartorial objects and narratives.

The second key finding that the single object type, namely the trousers facilitates, is the exposure of the skewed, and notably racist nature of the segregations. This segregation, initially imposed upon the objects in their acquisition, continued subsequently in their museal lives within distinct collections framed by notions of timelessness or modernity. My trouser readings enable an exploration of the possibilities for considering the objects beyond the biased, limited and limiting stereotypes imposed on them by the museum structures. Furthermore, this methodology shows, via a combination of imaginative or speculative biographies and histories (particularly in relation to the ethnographic objects that have largely been framed without history in museum collections), and a reading of the records and the objects, that these material items hold within their forms and folds, the memories of their original wearers. This approach reflects on the practices that determined the objects' largely segregated musealisation, and the violence of their epistemological framing. Furthermore, the close sartorial readings, as an inter-disciplinary methodology, brings to light the differential affordances latent within each of the collections, which could contribute towards reframing the integration efforts of Iziko Museums.

The third outcome of this strategy illustrates and extends on both Allman's argument that the sartorial is a powerful and under-explored alternative archive (2004) and Basu and de Jong's decolonial assertion of the dynamic affordances of colonial archives (2016). Firstly, as these objects are 're-read' in the present (in new ways) they reflect upon the "repertoires of action latent in the archives" (Basu & de Jong, 2016:5), and secondly, as these readings bear witness to the complex and often entangled multivalence of the objects, they prompt ways in which the archives can be "reconfigured to imagine decolonial futures" (ibid.). The sartorial strategy in this thesis allows for a "new mode of writing, thinking and making with the [objects of the] past, in the present [that] show a mutability of the colonial archive as acknowledged and explored through its multiple and unanticipated affordances in the present" (Basu & de Jong, 2016:9). The trouser readings thus afford new approaches to reading the archives and present "different epistemological engagements" with their 'materialities' and 'performativities' (ibid.).

Lastly, the sartorial strategy developed in this thesis, as a cross-cutting methodology, interrupts the siloed nature of the disciplinary practices and dispositions adhering to, and influencing the objects. Colonial and apartheid ideologies, deeply ingrained in the siloed museal structures have resulted in inherently discriminatory, divided and exclusionary collections of objects, with sartorial objects being clearly marked by racist tropes. Key to the transformation imperatives of Iziko Museums, and critical to the rethinking of colonial and apartheid-influenced notions of what is history, what is deemed collection-worthy, and how these narratives are articulated, is the need to disrupt the impact of the immense histories of practices on the current conditions evident in South African museums, their collections and their dispositions. That clear boundaries were established between white and black South African sartorial narratives – as part of a broader political imperative in the twentieth century – resulted in segregated, siloed and skewed collections in museums.

The trouser readings in this thesis, begin to offer what Mignolo and Vazquez identify as the decolonial method, which “names the empowerment and affirmation of those dignities wounded under racial classifications [and] under the logic of the disposability of human life in the name of civilisation and progress” (2013:16). The decolonial method shows the genealogy of thought, work or ideology in western modernity; secondly, it shows how these ideas and actions have functioned to erase, silence and denigrate other ways of understanding; and, thirdly, it proposes spaces open to the plurality of alternatives (Mignolo and Vazquez, 2013:16). The sartorial readings offer a decolonial method as they allow me firstly, to think critically with and about the sartorial objects in the museums; secondly, to investigate the possibilities of breaking the disciplinary silos and their silencing effects through a *dress/fashion*-based approach; and thirdly, to consider the materialities and performativities of the *dress/fashion* collections in South African museums in search of new or alternate narratives and identities.

REFASHIONING AFROFUTURES: (RE)BELONGINGS & (RE)PRESENTATIONS

My third and final conclusion, returns to a range of ‘refashioning’ responses to the sartorial dilemmas identified at the outset of this thesis. Drawing on the materiality of the sartorial objects in the museums, as sites for the intimate exploration of lived experiences, agency and embodiment, I bring into focus, not only traces of embodiment, scuffs, wear and tear, or efforts of mending or repair, that render sartorial objects in museums as particular forms of archive, but also the bodies of wearers as engaging in the making of their subjective, gendered, cultural, professional, or political identities through these material artefacts. Embodied memories stored in the garment’s folds, creases, scents and stains reflect,

... a relationship with clothing [that] is not only aspirational and image led; it is cultural, sensory and embodied, and we, as everyday dressers, are the authors of our own fashioning (Romano & Sampson, 2018).

The use of *dress/fashion* as acts of political expression imprint the sartorial objects in South African museum collections with archival potency – the objects proffer an encyclopedic archive of political agency, expression, feelings, moods, personal motivations, and histories both intimate and public. The sartorial objects, both in the museum, and beyond (for example, in paintings, fragments, literacy texts, and photographs) present multiple, and mutable possibilities for re-reading in the present. As Basu and de Jong suggest,

... if the incomplete and partial nature of the archived past places limits on the truth claims of the narratives that we construct [in the present about the past], it also produces the conditions of possibility for the construction of alternative narratives, which have similar claims to truth (2016:15).

To rethink sartorial collections as records of daily decisions made in response to the practicalities of comfort, occasion, function and mood; or the imposition of orders and orderliness; or the impulses of extravagance, sadness or delight, is to encounter the shirt, apron or scarf in the museum as performative, political and

subjective, both together with, and beyond, their inherited taxonomies of history, design and culture. As palimpsests of identities, the sartorial collections at Iziko Museums are considerably rich resources for future researchers, scholars and curators.

Kavanagh, in her proposition of museums as dream spaces, claims that “the threads of memory, imagination, feelings and identity” are evidenced in museums through object biographies, extended personal narratives and oral histories (2000:2). As a means to remedy an often deficient situation in museums, where certain stories or dreams have been forgotten or were never remembered, decolonial thinker, Deliss proposes acts of “remediation, to experiment with alternative ways of describing, interpreting and displaying museum objects and absences,” so that new and different stories can emerge (2015). Mignolo and Vazquez add that, key to a decolonial re-writing of the past, is a “commitment to the human that plays out in a range of alternative curatorial practices” (2013:14). In this thesis, I have shown how the sartorial objects within museums (and some notable absences) are significant and critical sites for these re-negotiations with the past in the present, via the remembered, recalled and even, re-embodied notion of the wearer as agentive and subjective.

As Mbembe points out, in the decolonising project “we are not just dealing with, or erasing the past; instead, we are confronting the traces of the past as they emerge in the now, and importantly, we are confronting the ways in which these traces impact our future thinking” (Mbembe, 2016b). Contemporary African-American artist, Titus Kaphar illustrates this creative, and conceptual future responsibility when describing his own work,

... I've always been fascinated by history ... how history is written, recorded, distorted, exploited, re-imagined, and understood. In my work, I explore the materiality of reconstructive history; as I paint and sculpt, I borrow from the historical canon, and then alter it in some way (2017).

A strong advocate for the notion of African futures, Mbembe describes the economic and socio-political productivity of the interface between Africa (its youth, culture and creativity) and the increasing presence, uptake and affordances of technology that has seen an accelerated pace of new forms of knowledge development from Africa, and an unprecedented “entanglement of the deep past with notions of present and future imaginaries” (2016b). For a long time, the question of the future was not on the agenda when dealing with the questions of Africa. Mbembe argues that, “the plasticity of digital forms speaks powerfully to the plasticity of African precolonial cultures and to ancient ways of working with representation and mediation, of folding realities” (2016b). The entanglement or ‘collage’ of humans with objects and technologies, suggests Mbembe, is particularly pertinent to shared and similar approaches to both boundaries of perception and co-existent notions of time and space, equally common to traditional and virtual forms of thinking (2016b).

In this regard the past, and the objects and actions of the past, are not ignored, “but rather that these are folded into the present, which are folded into the future” and definitions of time and space become blurred (Keene, 2018). First articulated by writer, Mark Dery in *Black to the Future* (1993), Afrofuturism is the expression of new, hopeful and advanced futures or worlds, imagined through blackness, black struggles and black ideas, writes Alisha Acquaye, “as a way of understanding the past and present, transcending systemic obstacles, and crafting futures that we can control ... futures that shine with black excellence and innovation” (2017).

Various traces of these digital remixes of the past and present as Afrofutures can be seen across a range of local and global, academic and creative platforms in the last decade. European fashion houses, Kenzo and Gucci both featured campaigns for Summer 2017 that referenced black sartorial histories as expressions of future desires; Gucci's 2018 collaboration with Dapper Dan⁵⁷⁴ saw the re-writing of the laws of creative appropriation; and Versace Spring 2019 “goes quom⁵⁷⁵ with Uyang'khumbula by Thato Ramaisa (Fela Gucci) and Buyani Duma (Desire Marea)” (Keteyi, 2018). Lesotho-born electro/hip-hop musician, Morena Leraba's

574 Gucci sued Dapper Dan in the 1980s for creating fake Gucci prints. Thirty years later, Gucci created a partnership with Dapper Dan, recognising the power, authority and nuances of Dan's black sartorial interpretations (Houghton, 2018).

575 Quom is a style of house music that emerged in Durban, KwaZulu Natal in the early twenty-first century.

fusion of Basotho 'shepherd culture' and contemporary urban sounds (Kriger, 2017) draws on Mbembe's notion of the "plasticity of African precolonial cultures and ancient ways of working with representation and mediation" (Mbembe, 2016b), as a reframing or enfolding of aesthetic realities, notions of belonging and claims to 'tribal' modernities. Lesotho-born designer and activist, Maria McCloy's Facebook status (16/02/18) captures the powerful impact of both an imagined and imaginary belonging in Coogler's *Black Panther* (2018):

Basotho iconic aesthetics and culture captured so STRONGLY in Black Panther. That made me want to cry, as did the rest of it ... Wakanda – with Babes Wo Dumo, huts, Ndebele walls, Mali sky scrapers, izangomas, tech sangomas, animals, tech animals, roots, super powers, ancient and modern combining – is what Africa shoulda coulda woulda been ... (McCloy, 2018).

The casting of the 'Basotho' blankets in the film, by costume designer, Ruth Carter as magical and powerful, reframed not only the 'traditional' African object, but the wearer too, as powerful and magical, captured in the film with gestures of swagger, mythical command and prowess. The alliance between wearer and object re-scripted both wearers and artefacts as active participants in the making of new meanings, across the costumed spectrum of Carter's imaginary Wakanda. The importance of this relationship – of wearing, the object and the continually changing, contextual remaking of meaning – has ramifications with regards sartorial objects in museum collections.

Global responses to the film, *Black Panther* witnessed 'African' pride encompassing hair, cultures, dress, language, architecture, indigenous knowledges and the representation of Africa as reflecting positive and powerful futures. The central role of clothing in the production of contemporary and simultaneously traditional identities in the film⁵⁷⁶ confronted the ongoing limited representation of cultural diversity in popular media, as well as the role and meaning of 'tradition' in relation to modernity and futurity. Native American academic, Adrienne Keene's tweet expressed a similar response to the power of cultural representation in the film,

I saw Black Panther tonight. I may or may not have started crying at several times when it was completely inappropriate because the idea of a truly decolonized, future indigenous place was just helluva overwhelming (@Native Approps, 23/02/18).

Fashion thinking brings to the forefront, the embodied, subjective and engaged identity of the wearer, and is useful in offering new ways in which to imagine alternate epistemologies, challenge the Western ontologies at work in museums and transcend conventional oppositions between past and future, object and meaning, and the local and global. Because *dress/fashion* consists of both the material object, and the shifting, and changing socio-political identities of its wearers, the sartorial collections in museums are powerful sites for the disruption of representations of the past, and the for future imaginaries.

The *Sartists'* fashioning of absence through visual narratives of historic self-styling, re-script both perceptions and records of "notions of community, via new and imaginatively 're-embodied' subjectivities" (Picarelli, 2015:215). The contemporary writing of texts that were never created, takes particular shape when written by voices and shaped by bodies that had been excluded from the original archives. What this implies for Iziko Museums and their *dress/fashion* archives, is to invite new voices for authenticating and authoring renewed, alternative and altogether rewritten narratives that could contribute to a range of radical sartorial disruptions within the museum. I propose that a *dress/fashion* museology, aimed at refashioning African pasts and imagining Afro-futures, that invites new forms of inclusive knowledge production, and re-written sartorial histories, can prompt decolonial processes and practices within South African museums via a contemporary discourse with, and through the lens of African *dress/fashion*. The provocations above will I hope go some way to contribute towards these developments.

⁵⁷⁶ Ryan Coogler's *Black Panther*, inspired by the 1966 Marvel creation by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, is a "stylish study in boundaries ... but the tale is also the site of identity construction" (St. Felix, 2018). Costume designer, Carter explains that although the costumes were deeply rooted in research about African traditions they also were fantastical and futuristic (Newbold, 2018).

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